The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE RYAN-COUGHLIN CONTROVERSY

WE HAVE received from a correspondent, Mr. W. D. Hennessy, of Grass Valley, California, a letter which so thoughtfully expresses its writer's views on subjects of the most important character to all Catholics—and, indeed, to all American citizens irrespective of their religious views—that we are printing it here, rather than in our correspondence columns, in order to call it more prominently to our readers' attention, and in the hope that it will induce many of them to share in the discussion which it is likely to provoke.

Mr. Hennessy's letter is as follows:

"To the Editor: There will doubtless be criticism of Monsignor John A. Ryan's radio talk in behalf of Mr. Roosevelt. Although I do not agree with Father Ryan on this question, I respect him greatly for his sincerity and his wide knowledge of economic and social problems. When we have Father Ryan advocating the election of Roosevelt, Father Coughlin shouting for Lemke and Al Smith supporting Landon, at least the myth of Catholic political solidarity is once more convincingly exploded. What interests me most, however, is the change in Father Ryan's attitude toward Father Coughlin's ideas. When Father Coughlin was warning that it was 'Roosevelt or Ruin,' Father Ryan was quoted as saying, if I remember correctly, that although he did not agree with everything Father Coughlin said, at least it could not be denied that the 'radio priest' was 'on the side of the angels.' Now that Father Coughlin has turned violently against Roosevelt, Father Ryan has no hesitation in denouncing policies which he formerly silently overlooked. Not that I am a supporter of Father Coughlin, most decidedly not; but I think Father Ryan's denunciation would have had more weight if it had been delivered under non-political auspices.

"This division of thought among Catholics should be recognized as a difference over methods,

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not as to objectives. As to the mechanics of reform, in so far as measures advocated to avert or soften the blows of another depression are concerned, are not these largely technical questions, the wisdom of which are surely debatable? And as to the effects of these measures, we should be able to intelligently discuss them without rancor. To cry 'Communism!' against the New Deal, or 'Tories and money changers' against its opponents, gets us nowhere. As I see it, the cleavage amongst Catholics on the means to achieve social justice, revolves about the part which the government should take in attaining these ends. That is no easy question to decide. . . . For my part, doubts as to the wisdom of New Deal theories have not been allayed but strengthened by the character of the President's advisers."

Before dealing with the graver issues raised by Mr. Hennessy's letter, there is one point, incidental to those issues, yet of considerable importance in itself, in which we think Mr. Hennessy is unintentionally unjust to Monsignor Ryan. This is his imputation that Monsignor Ryan is chiefly motivated in his present defense of President Roosevelt and his policies because Father Coughlin is attacking both. Those who are really well acquainted with Monsignor Ryan's position know very well that it is not partizan devotion to President Roosevelt or his administration that caused him to give partial approval to Father Coughlin because the latter was then supporting the President, and to oppose Father Coughlin now that he is attacking the President.

For nearly forty years Monsignor Ryan has been the foremost American teacher and preacher of the principles of social justice as those principles have been laid down by Pope Leo XIII and the other supreme heads of the Catholic Church who have followed him, particularly the present Pontiff, Pius XI. His advocacy, or his condemnation, of all views expressed by other teachers or publicists, or legislation, have been consistently guided by his own absolutely sincere opinion that such views or legislation as he opposed were contrary to the teachings of the Church, and those he favored were in accord with those teachings. Rightly or wrongly, Monsignor Ryan holds that the New Deal is not merely negative in its relations to the principles of Christian social justice so long studied and expounded by him, but that it is positively in accord with those principles. When, therefore, Father Coughlin, in the first period of his unprecedented fame and popular power, was so ardently preaching the cause of social justice, Monsignor Ryan, while even then not endorsing all of Father Coughlin's ideas, did approve of Father Coughlin's general, and fundamental, point of view, namely, that the social evils of our age could only be solved by the practical application of the sanctions of the moral law in the economic and political fields of social action. But when Father Coughlin, who at first believed, with Monsignor Ryan, that President Roosevelt's policy was powerfully promoting social justice, then most violently changed his position, and accused the President of being "anti-God," and his policies as communistic, Monsignor Ryan opposed him. He did not do so primarily for political reasons. He did so because, in his view, the condemnation of the New Deal as communistic was false and absurd—almost as false and absurd as to charge that the social teachings of the Catholic Church are communistic.

It is not likely that Monsignor Ryan's radio addresses in this controversy will cause many of Father Coughlin's emotion-intoxicated Catholic followers to use their reason, and thus to subject Father Coughlin's oratory to the logical analysis which so clearly reveals its fatal contradictions. For example, in the very speech in which Father Coughlin first answered Monsignor Ryan he himself destroyed his own charge that the New Deal was tending to Communism, which he indeed repeated, by the counter-charge that the President had surrendered the complete monetary powers of the national government to the "international bankers." Father Coughlin wants to have it both ways, namely, that the President is hell-bent for Moscow, and hell-bent to the central stronghold of private capitalistic control simultaneously. The rank wizardry of his illogical yet crudely fascinating oratory may continue to obsess the unthinking portion of his diminishing audience; but the appeal to reason made by Monsignor Ryan will increasingly be heeded by those Catholics who use their heads.

We do not say, however, that all such reason-using Catholics will agree with Monsignor Ryan in believing that the New Deal thoroughly harmonizes with the principles of social justice taught by the Church. Indeed, many of them, we know, do not agree. But they are willing, and many of them are able, really to debate the question, and not merely to rant. We plead earnestly for such a debate. It is a wider and a more enduring debate than can be carried on very far, still less settled, during the last hectic days of this almost delirious campaign. But it will be continued after November 3, whatever the outcome of the elections may be. Social justice is one of the supreme issues of our age. The Catholic Church is supremely concerned in that issue. All Catholics above the mental level of children or of morons should take part in its discussion—not by Father Coughlin's method, but rather by that of the rules of reason followed by Monsignor Ryan. These rules may lead to disagreement with Monsignor Ryan himself; but out of honest disagreement, harmony may come. Father Coughlin's methods lead only toward discord—or disaster.

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Week by Week

WATCHING the campaign go by, one is impressed anew by the amount of political gambling being done by both sides. A couple of months ago this swapping of pawns on the chess-board astonished no one. Now that the final gong is just around the corner most of us expect what nobody seems ready to offer—a clean fight about fundamental differences of opinion. We have heard Governor Landon say that he will "balance the budget" without shutting off relief money or increasing taxes; we have heard Mr. Roosevelt declare that the tide of improving business will soon blot government debts from view. Very particularly engrossing have been the weeks of shadow-boxing for the farm vote. This has meant canny speeches and deals innumerable, but it is at the moment impossible to say just what either candidate is committed to by way of agricultural policy. The implication has been, true enough, that Mr. Roosevelt is a "Leftist" because he has taken Professor Tugwell unto his bosom and seldom exchanged the time of day with Senator Glass. But nobody has made it clear just what Professor Tugwell means: is he really the established prophet of a new order, or is he merely a decoy with the help of which certain groups of voters can be kept in line? The charge that Washington is now infested with Communists is of course also quite as difficult to diagnose: does it mean that Governor Landon is thinking of a thoroughgoing "old order" government, or is he merely holding out the idea of such a government as bait for certain groups of voters? To one who asks such questions, the current polls of electoral opinion are of little help. This time there are several of them, and taken together they can be made to predict any result you choose. Are we to draw the conclusion that the coming election is not to be a fundamental and grave decision at all, but only the results obtained by the strategists?

The Trend of Events

NEWS from France is decidedly more encouraging. Just prior to the devaluation proceedings, judicious reports were so pessimistic that one could hardly avoid feeling that some sort of dictatorship was just around the corner. The Blum "new deal" came too suddenly; and its policy of spending while deflation was still in progress was murderous to small business in particular. Now, in addition to a cheaper franc—and we must bear in mind that the French devaluationists have not shot all their bolt, but can safely pare off another 20 percent—several other things have happened. First, the line of cleavage between M. Blum's Socialists and M. Thorez's Communists has been clearly drawn. This in turn has made possible a more active Radical Socialist participation in the government; and it is to this group that many of France's ablest and most experienced men belong. Finally, in so far as the Communists are concerned, Russia has almost openly applied the brakes. The mere fact that the number of projected meetings in Alsace-Lorraine was voluntarily cut down to ten shows that Stalin is continuing his anti-Trotsky tactics. Unless the situation suddenly changes, there will for some time to come be less danger of a revolution from the Left in France, and few believe that the danger from the Right is very great. We do not wish to be unduly optimistic, but the indications seem to be that the Third Republic is stabler than had been supposed. It is hardly necessary to add that a Catholic ventures this conclusion with a sigh of relief. Quiet and moderate social progress in France is perhaps the foremost prerequisite for the moral sanitation of contemporary Europe.

European Summary

WAR ALWAYS seems to Americans unthinkable. Yet John Cudahy, American Ambassador to Poland, speaking for the reelection of President Roosevelt, calls war "the paramount issue" of the campaign. He believes war will soon be raging in Europe and believes the present administration could likely keep us out of it, while an administration under Landon and the Republicans could not. The speech was interesting less because it was partizan than because it was grim. The thought of war does certainly paralyze Americans, and when it actually comes on a world scale, we will be still more paralyzed. The idea of laying out our action in advance by neutrality legislation and planned and agreed policy will theoretically permit safe and automatic conduct when the time comes. It is dangerous, however, as everything connected with war is dangerous. Diplomats object to the prospect of mechanical rules eliminating flexibility which would possibly prove salutary. There is danger that a mechanized routine would lead mechanically into conflict. The greatest peril is that neutrality laws might be simply additions to mobilization laws, rationalizing into the military administration the few elements that keep the picture of "M Day" vague. It would be good to keep finance from getting a stake in conflict. It would be good to erase the prospect of war profits from the business horizon. But to do this by assuring the complete and absolute mobilization of all economics, the spread of military discipline to every factory and man in the country seems wrong. Compulsory military service alone made the last war possible. The kind of a war that complete and completely efficient compulsory military, economic and social service would bring is

The War Issue

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not a happy prospect. Disarmament comes with diminution, not increase of the draft. You can't fight a war without guns and without people to shoot them. Guns and men today really mean all resources. Making it supremely simple for a government to get all of them hardly seems a way for a state to keep itself out of the next war.

ONE FURTHER point in the Ryan-Coughlin debate seems worth noting—the general impression conveyed by the newspapers that this opposition of priest to priest on matters of social or political import was astounding, like nothing ever heard of before, and indicative of a new era. It is true that since the Civil War no previous cleavages have been so dramatically aired before the public. But during that war there were several stirring debates, though of course there were no radios. In Europe such clashes have been frequent. We might mention, for example, one or the other sharp dispute concerning the interpretation of "Quadragesimo Anno," which is the very document upon which Monsignor Ryan and Father Coughlin based their appeals. Differences of opinion concerning aspects of National Socialism have likewise aroused widespread interest. But the classic instance surely is the long and bitter argument which raged in France between Catholic conservatives and republicans. In each of these cases, dispute has arisen concerning the application of fundamental moral principles to existing practical conditions. That is natural, human, inevitable. Similar wrangling was characteristic of the Middle Ages, and has subsided in modern times primarily because — as Father Paul Simon has ably pointed out in a recent book—Catholics have always been compelled to reckon with the effect of what they say on the outside world. In so far as the individual spectator is concerned, he can only seek to determine as best he can the credibility of each spokesman. He must not be too hectic in his clamor for a decision by "higher authority."

An Interesting Battle

TO HIS EMINENCE, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, we beg leave to extend a sincere welcome. All will hope that this trip to young and greatly blest America will restore energies necessarily taxed by the great trials and perils of recent years. During the Ages of Faith it was possible even for the Pope to journey from Rome to countries beyond the Alps; but modern times, for various reasons, have permitted no such thing, and even papal dignitaries are seldom seen abroad. At any rate, this is the first time a guest of Cardinal Pacelli's rank has come to the United States. He took pains to emphasize the private nature of the present voyage, reiterating what he has said upon many previous occasions—that, after having profited by sojourns in many other countries, he was looking forward with particular interest to enjoyment of life's spectacle in this country. The Church, custodian of a universally valid Revelation, is ruled by men very conscious of the autonomous abilities and achievements of all peoples. These abilities and achievements constitute the conditions under which the message of Christ is bought to hearts and consciences. They are never ultimates, but their relativity serves either as a barrier against or an avenue toward spiritual enlightenment. Few will deny that the extraordinary tact with which the Church has traditionally dealt with these things singles it out historically from other institutions. American Catholics have been profoundly convinced that the reasoned freedom of their national life is a providential complement to the religious orderliness of their faith; and they rejoice that in Cardinal Pacelli they have a friend who is deeply impressed with this conviction.

A Word of Greeting

THE MAN in Syracuse who has just patented a honking cane takes his place, we believe, with the benefactors of modern humanity. Not only is his invention completely inutilitarian, thereby striking a long-needed note in the history of invention; it is also calculated to satisfy a deep and subtle craving of which invention has never even heard—the craving for "heart-easing mirth." The story of the long and triumphant progress of mechanical genius has a great many things in it, but laughter is not one of them. Even palpable blessings, like the electric light, do not evoke the spirit of gaiety and abandon. The truth is, these devices are too deadly useful. Reason can see their purpose and even acclaim their achievement; but it is not in a reasonable esteem that we must expect to find the seed of careless joy. One of the best American cartoonists, sensing this lack, did his best to redress things by spoofing the great god Invention. The point of the Goldberg machinery was a gorgeous overcomplication (involving all the household equipment without the usual exception of the kitchen stove) to achieve an imperceptible result, like lighting a cigar or turning on the bath. The happy shout that greeted these fine works was proof of how humanity had longed for the spirit that created them. Of such is the Syracusan whom we now honor. He has studied the matter of retaliation for the indignity of being honked at by unexpected auto horns, and made to leap incontinently for adjacent curbs. The result is a cane which gives back the infuriating bray of the motor horn, blatt for blatt. What balm to stand on the curb and return the derisive sound!

The Higher Benefaction

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THE PRESENT FRONT IN GERMANY

By WILLIAM WESTERN

During recent weeks, we have endeavored to present authoritative descriptions of the Catholic situation in countries where the Church is particularly imperiled. The following paper is written by a priest who for years has enjoyed unusual opportunities to observe events in Germany. He shows in particular that the fundamental Nazi aim—subordination of all institutions to the State—is being realized with the help of tactics different from those normal to modern revolutionary countries.—The Editors.

THE recent events in Spain seem to have completely overshadowed the interest in the German situation on the part of the Catholic public and the press. Burning churches and monasteries, torturing and murdering nuns and priests, shooting lay workers of Catholic Action are of course facts which cannot be ignored and their meaning is so evident that there cannot be any doubt about a persecution of the Church in Spain.

Does that mean that Catholics in America should be less upset by the German situation? Should the leaning toward Fascism, which seems to sweep the world whenever it is bewildered by the threatening advance of the Leftists in Spain and France, make us blind to the aims and acts of an equally dangerous enemy to our freedom of conscience and our work for the Christianization of society? Are the events in Spain an excuse or even a justification for the Nazi attitude toward the Church and Christianity in Germany?

There are two documents on the present situation in Germany which speak for themselves and which should open the eyes of many Catholics in this country who sympathize with Hitler's political aims and therefore want to ignore the other side of the picture as being nothing but a trifling or temporary misunderstanding between an energetic and well-meaning statesman and politically minded, stubborn churchmen who will recognize their own salvation only through force of pressure and facts. These two documents are the joint pastoral letter of the Fulda Conference of the German Bishops and the complaint of the Protestant Church leaders, followed by an appeal to the public by the same men. Although the Protestant document seems to be more outspoken on many things which we have learned through the press and which for a long time we could hardly believe, because they were so opposed to our ideas of modern civilization, and although it cannot be doubted that the Protestant document ranges much further as an advocate not only of the very plaint of the Church itself, but also of the Christian concept of human dignity and freedom, the Catholic document together with the other from all German pulpits, shows us clearly where the front lines of the German "Kulturkampf" are drawn. The situation seems indeed to be much more serious than many of us realize.

There is no doubt that the aim of the Nazi party, which is the absolute lord of 66,000,000 Germans within the present borders of the Reich and the potential and perhaps future master of another 10,000,000 or 11,000,000 linguistic and racial Germans at present under foreign rule in nearby or far-away countries, is the substitution for the Christian Churches of a creed which is more convenient to the nature of Germans and makes them more fit to devote themselves entirely and without restriction to the political task as figured out by the Nazis.

This is to be a religion which identifies the German people with the Supreme Being and makes "religious" every institution of the State. After a seven-hours conference with Hitler, the Reich-leader of the German students, Derichsweiler, a former Catholic and member of a Catholic Students club, informed his audience in one of the many holiday camps that the words "positive Christianity" in the party program of 1920 were to be understood "as if a doctor would not tell a sick man the full truth, but uses terms to which the man is accustomed." " 'Positive' Christianity is nothing else but religious feeling." We all know that Rosenberg, the Fuehrer's lieutenant and dictator in all educational and pedagogic questions, has created thousands of opportunities to teach every German man and boy that positive Christianity means a religion of a purely German aspect, purged of all un-German and Asiatic ingredients. If we put it quite blunt and less misleading than the Nazi leaders: The Church in Germany has either to remain what she used to be since she came to that country, and that would be her death sentence, or else to assume Nazi principles and become absorbed into the State as one of the means to unifying and strengthening the political force of the country.

Even at the risk of repeating facts which have been told over and over again, I must show what has been done to the Church in Germany, so one may grasp what is really happening in that country.

Before I do so, I must explain one peculiarity of the Nazi tactics which has misled not only the press but men of responsibility in Germany itself. The policy of the Nazis in Germany is very complex. As there is an official government

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in Russia and the Comintern, so there is the same double-track action in Germany. For each government agency, there exists a corresponding agency of the party, the task of which is to push the state machinery forward to action on the lines of the party program. This can easily be proved by many instances. Let us take the SS, Hitler's selected black troops, under Himmler's command, and the Gestapo, the official political police. The SS, an abbreviation from Schutz-Staffel, runs its own weekly. Now before the Gestapo takes action against any person for a political or alleged moral offense, the SS weekly, *Das Schwarze Korps* (the *Black Corps*), begins a campaign: It starts with mysterious allusions to some activity hostile to the country in certain circles, continues by giving names, and finishes by printing documents, true and forged, before even the court has taken any steps or heard any testimony about these "criminal facts." Throughout the trial that follows, the SS weekly will go on printing material encouraging public approval of the prosecution against the "criminals," thus intimidating the court, the witnesses and all potential sympathizers. Every now and then a lieutenant of Hitler, either a state or party functionary, will endorse this campaign and use the material brought forth by the weekly in a sarcastic and embittered speech against the "enemy." This has happened in the many trials against those religious who were prosecuted for currency smuggling or immorality, and their cause was already judged at the very moment when the *Schwarze Korps* began its allusions and mysterious hints. As many party leaders are at the same time state functionaries, this double-track system works without friction and guarantees by the personal union of state and party man, a strong and ever-growing influence of the party in the state machinery.

But this is not yet the real goal aimed at. Scandal trials, imprisonment of priests and nuns, attacks on the Christian denominations as hostile to true national feeling, ridiculing of churchmen—in short, those things which are so often taken for the essence of persecution—are nothing but a smoke screen or an "artillery preparation" for those things which strike the Church at vital points. They make it uncomfortable to be a Catholic in Germany, they intimidate the faithful, they prepare the public by instilling them with contempt and hatred, but they cannot destroy the Church: martyrdom has never been fatal to any national unit in the Church. The real issue lies behind all this: therefore Hitler can always stop a trial, release a priest, or rebuke one of his lieutenants who has gone farther in his attacks on the Church than the present strategical situation permits or the Fuehrer thinks good, without giving up one point of his real aims. On the contrary, it helps his struggle: it bewilders and confuses his adversary, making him ready to try to negotiate with him once more. It strengthens the idea of his power within the party and of his good-will toward the Church, "which is only misunderstood by the Leftist and Marxian wing in his party," as some time ago an ambitious prelate wrote in an Austrian paper, without noticing how ridiculous this must sound to Nazi ears.

This apparent generosity and justice is constantly stabbing Catholics and Protestants in the back and is paid for by some new and terrible losses, as it shatters the confidence in leadership and creates a certain tension within the very ranks of the faithful. It is hard to say if Hitler really acts with premeditation or impulsively out of a certain mood of generosity and then only accepts the result of this policy *post factum*. Even a total interruption of the "open" persecution by the will of the Fuehrer would not mean freedom and peace with the Church, as meanwhile there have been created conditions which she cannot accept. It is the sensationally minded that require such things as murder or arson to be convinced that an important and strong limb of Christ's Mystical Body faces most serious dangers. The following words of the German bishops show how far the enemy has advanced his lines:

> We [the bishops] cannot understand why . . . [in view of the progress of Bolshevism in Spain] the sphere of influence of Christianity and Church is more and more reduced and now limited to the very building of our churches. We cannot understand . . . why the further existence of our Catholic organization must be threatened. We do not understand why members of Catholic organizations, even the Children of Mary, are forbidden to enlist in Trade Unions, etc. [which are necessary for social and economical existence in Germany], why Catholic fathers and their families are threatened with starvation if they do not sever their allegiance to Catholic organizations. We cannot understand why our charitable organizations are more and more driven out of their customary fields of activity, and why Catholic nuns are driven away from sick beds and kindergartens. We cannot understand why press regulations have been made even for purely religious weeklies and monthlies except for the destruction of our Catholic press. We cannot understand why Christian youth is withdrawn from Christian influence and exposed to anti-Christian influences and contagion by forcing them into interdenominational organizations. We cannot understand why in the German states an attempt is made to abolish our parish and high schools and why in a great part of our country this has already been done by a "plebiscite," in spite of the fact that the Concordat guarantees not only their existence but even the erection of new schools. These hindrances to our religious freedom are the more fatal and dangerous if we look at the atrocities of Bolshevism in other countries. . . .

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This sentence resumes the main issue of the letter, that Bolshevism is a danger which cannot be averted by arms but by spiritual forces such as faith and that those who harm the freedom of the Church dig their own grave.

Although this letter says nothing about the financial difficulties which threaten the Church in many ways through all sorts of laws and statutes against collections and the drastic cutting down of the Church income, or the heavy taxation and "voluntary" contributions weighing on the lower and middle classes, it shows quite clearly what the Church has already lost. As the bishops clearly state, the Church in spite of the existence of the new Concordat of 1933 is confined to her buildings, she has lost her hold on the education of youth, since her schools and her organizations have been taken away from her; her charities are threatened with extinction through drastic restrictions: there is only one Sunday in the year left on which the Church and the Red Cross are allowed to take up a collection. The nuns are driven out of hospitals as well as out of their schools; a systematic terror and boycott forces Catholics to join anti-Catholic organizations while they are forbidden to remain faithful to their own unions, unless they wish to risk being put out on the street and condemned to starvation.

The bishops say nothing about priests who have been thrown into prison or exiled for the mere fact that they dared to preach the doctrine of their Church on such moral questions as sterilization, priority of religion over nationalism, the principles of the papal encyclicals, etc. They do not mention what young men and fathers of families had to undergo if they dared to protest against the suppression of their institutions, which they created according to the exhortations of their spiritual superiors in order to defend their faith and to provide themselves with the necessary means of a Catholic and Christian life amidst a world of hostility and pride. The pastoral is careful not to offend the brutal masters of the German people; it simply ignores the fact that Catholics may have a right to disagree on certain political lines with the Nazis, not out of mere "liberal" criticism, but out of Catholic principles, laid down in the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. But it does allude to the fact that through Hitler's lieutenants, Goebbels and Ammann, and their institutions, the Reichspressekammer and Reichskulturkammer, those papers which have not been destroyed or taken over by Hitler's great Eher Concern have been gradually emasculated and put on the death roll.

They who still doubt are advised to read the official protest of the Protestant Church which has been recently published in all important newspapers. At the risk of their freedom or their lives, these Protestant ministers of the Confessional Church, led by men like the intrepid Pastor Niemoeller, describe the situation of their church in heartbreaking terms: their lot is in many respects worse than our own, as they have a schism among themselves. With a desperate courage they even venture to criticize the tortures of the concentration camps, the perversions of justice, the idolatry of the Fuehrer, whose picture has of late been exposed on church altars and whom Goebbels, on the eve of the 1936 plebiscite, dared to call the high priest of the German nation, while others attribute to his infallibility, salvation of the Germans and the source of the law.

The threat of Russian and Spanish methods in connection with a dispossessing social revolution and a growing anti-Semitism, provoked by much imprudent behavior of many Jews, makes the "bourgeois" world more and more inclined to adopt Fascism. It means conservation of the present social order or at least a less sanguinary transformation. Those thousands who have died in concentration camps or have been shot while attempting to escape are not mentioned in the news and are rapidly forgotten; for they mostly belonged to another class. That the state of suppression of the Catholic Church in Germany is a real persecution waged with diabolical methods, cannot be doubted by anyone who saw the Catholic Church and her hierarchy there some years ago.

Once it was the greatest and most respected moral and spiritual power, the strongest advocate of every noble cause, now it must endure the incredible shame of being forced to silence while the working classes, for whom Bishop Ketteler had fought long before Leo XIII's encyclical was written, are reduced to practical slavery, while hundreds of misled youngsters are shot and tortured in concentration camps, while the terrible purge of June 30, 1934, offended every German's feeling for human rights, while immorality and corruption and a reckless war spirit are preached, while a persecution of the Jews invaded the country and was extended to their own flock. The few things on which the Church in Germany has spoken and could speak—neo-paganism, sterilization, confessional school and other breaches of the Concordat—have already merited her the accusation of "political Catholicism" and in the case of individual speakers that of hostility to the State or even of treason. A national unit of the Church which can no more preach the very principles of Christianity, and which is driven back to the sacristy and the altar while a terrible war is launched against her in public with the help of the State, is in a state of persecution, and it is equally deplorable whether this is the work of Bolsheviks, Freemasons or those treacherous men who hide their anti-Christian aims behind the pretense of fighting Bolshevism. A treacherous and false friend is no better than an open enemy.

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PATMORE: A REVALUATION

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

WHATEVER may happen to poetry, it will always remain an art and, indeed, the most illustrious of the arts. This sounds like a very trite remark, but it is (I think) a salutary one. When critics are too much concerned with the philosophic attitudes or ideas reflected in this or that segment of modern poetry, it is perhaps well to recall that an art does not exist to serve a haranguer's end. Which brings us to some important questions. Is the content, or meaning, of a verse a thing of consequence? Does it matter, for instance, what Dante believed, or can one enjoy his work to the full while remaining indifferent to his creed? And of precisely what use is poetry, generally speaking, to an inquiry into the fortunes of the human mind?

These queries are not easy to answer. The Abbé Henri Brémond brought much that has been said and thought within the limits of a daring formula when he constructed his theory of pure poetry—that is, of poetic vitality, akin to mystical insight, which charms us despite the abstractions or objects which the language as such sets forth. The same notion was expressed with vastly less finesse during the Elizabethan time, when many a bard opined that his craft existed merely to put beautiful words on paper, where they might serve as texts for equally beautiful melodies. But thereupon Sidney wrote what still remains one of the most magnificent pleas in English literature, claiming for the poet the dignity of *vates,* which is see-er into mystery, and robing his craft in ethical nobility. If the same debate is in progress today, puzzling for example Mr. T. S. Eliot, we may well feel that the decision will ultimately go to some new Sidney who will overshadow his opponents not because he is demonstrably right (it is not easy to demonstrate anything) but because human thought finds him more congenial company.

But we must not look for the wrong things. Poets have too frequently been false prophets, victims of crude error and obstinate negators of fact ever to permit the assumption that they are infallible guides to scientific truth. There are a certain number—quite a large number—of facts in the world, and when we come upon some of them in the poets we may appropriately rejoice. There are also necessarily a good many guesses in the world, to which partizans are always anxious to erect monuments. Such guesses when found in the poets are not worth more than guesses found anywhere else. It is easy enough to say that one of several theories to account for something must be right; but the sad truth of the matter is that we shall never know for certain, in this world, which one it is. The ultimate value of a philosophy lies in the assistance it renders to the absorption and utilization of facts—in being a kind of Vichy water with the help of which we may down the obvious to our best advantage.

Now there happens to exist in every age a definite preference for some especial and vital facts. The people of this or that time visibly struggle to get hold, intellectually, ethically and emotionally, of *their* facts. Thus the whole Elizabethan age is obsessed with a passionate concern for the virtue of loyalty, and with a curiously morbid absorption in the phenomenon of cruelty. The thirteenth century seems to have strained every nerve to get hold of order: this is the quarry on the scent of which Dante is a veritable hound; it is the whip which drives Aquinas, the slave of truth, to toil like a menial at the huge "Summa"; and it is this which impels men to attempt the huge expressive coordinations of the cathedrals. And perhaps very recently the central human fact has been disorder—that essential disunity to which Dostoievsky devoted his vast and relentless researches, to which the Expressionists offered a burnished mirror, and one aspect of which a personality like that of André Gide almost visibly incarnates.

We ought therefore, it seems to me (who must be brief), look for these things in the poets whom we read for the light they throw on intellectual history. Of course it doesn't seriously matter that Dante thought the Ptolemaic system of astronomy correct, or that he bitterly disapproved of certain Popes. Even without Thomistic philosophy he would still have been a great thinker and artist. But Dante is certainly not intelligible —indeed, I doubt if he is even conceivable—apart from his passionate love of order. Unless we are willing to recognize both his absorption in this and its intrinsic importance, we might just as well read Edgar Guest, who causes rather less trouble. These fundamental beliefs of the great poets are also always right. They may be stated awkwardly, but they are the verities which alone give art its unshakable guarantee of immortality. No trifler has ever been a truly great poet—which is one reason why many lovable and gifted poets are not important. But of course you can be a very serious believer without also being an artist. That is a sad truth too frequently ignored.

* * * *

I have elsewhere set down, though most imperfectly, what I feel to be true concerning

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Coventry Patmore. It remains to add that the contours of Catholic poetry in the modern time are largely of his tracing; and though Francis Thompson is better known and Father Gerard Hopkins from one point of view greater, Patmore remains the only modern "poet of the Faith" who cannot be thought out of English literature. The reason is exceedingly simple. Everything he wrote, thought and was had to do with his central concern, which was purity. Just as Browning kept marveling at the taut-drawn bow of human destiny, or as Wordsworth looked forever at the vision of beauty that "loomed presagent in the gaze of youth," so was Patmore drawn toward the "lustre of whiteness" *ex parte infidelium*.

Let us first see what this meant to him. One has only to read the poems or prose essays a little way to see that for Patmore real life has its commencement in heroism. "If you wish to be commonly good, the easiest, indeed the only way, is to be heroically so," he said aphoristically. The same conviction is the theme of "Victory in Defeat," as indeed of half the great odes. But the real test of man's daring is love, since this is the science of life. The poet fully understood and appreciated virginity, in so far as that was conscious sacrifice of a recognized good for the noblest of ends. But that sham "purity" which is bred of self-protection (the protection of an "honor" consciously or otherwise held to confer a value upon the possessor) he held in the greatest scorn, as being the prostitution of a human essential to the level of a thing. By comparison with this, true purity resides in love between the sexes, when this has been blessed with the transfiguration of the marriage sacrament. Mating is heroic purity because in it purity is constantly defended, with routine and sortie, against beleaguering forces. "The Angel in the House" is a magnificent chronicle of that defense. There love is always in danger, but yet always safe.

Just how is the guard maintained? The power of insight which was granted to Patmore was never more remarkable than when he replied to this query. Marriage is the perennial repetition of the drama of Paradise, in which disobedience of the woman to law made her beauty the lure of man. Patmore's verse often seems to imply a quite feudal relation between the sexes, as when his mistress sings,

> Parting 's well-paid with soon again to meet,
> Soon in your arms to feel so small and sweet,
> Sweet to myself that am so sweet to you!

And in the aphorisms we read the proud surmisal: "If the Son is the Bride of the Father and the Husband of the Church, it follows that the male soul may be the Bride of Christ and the Husband of the female." Woman must be subject to the man, lest she in turn prod him into rebellion. But of course it is immediately clear to all but dullards that this subjection is exacted only in love. There is never the slightest doubt that Patmore's mistress is not expected to black her master's boots, or accept his theories concerning the education of children. The fundamental meaning is that if female affection strays from the ring of subservience to the husband, a treason is committed against which the fortress of purity cannot be defended.

Patmore's theory of why this is true is necessarily theological. For there is no other possible basis for truth. A non-theistic philosopher may plead for action or conduct on the ground that it is useful, or that it promises to assure the greatest good of the greatest number, or that it is esthetically more pleasing. But, as Plato saw prior to the era of Christ, the strength of any code of conduct —or in Patmore's terms, the value of any heroic effort—can really be guaranteed only by God. All ethical laws possess validity only in so far as we can assume them analogical to laws governing the Creative Spirit. And consequently Patmore spared himself no pains either of study or vision to glimpse the rules which fulfil themselves in the Divine Being. "The Unknown Eros" may seem to progress from the image of human love to the verity of God's affection for the soul. In reality it is the other way round. In the book the purely human odes come last. They are deductions from, not indications toward, the reality of Heavenly Love. This last proves them; they do not prove it.

Now I think we are once again in a position to understand the remarkable value of this intuition. If history and psychology have anything to tell us, it is first of all that the situation presented in the story of Paradise is absolutely correct from the merely human point of view. Love is, as even so blunt a naturalist as Professor Glover teaches, fundamentally an art; and it is failure to realize this fact which makes of so many, many marriages enduring hells in petto, wherein the angels of commingling become the demons of lust (falling and changing like the spirits in Milton's poem) or wherein throbbing poetry is mocked into being bald prose. Like every other art this too has its inexorable rules. The woman is the material to which the plastic conception—man—comes seeking expression that shall eventually be two in one flesh. And unless she remain even as clay and he keep his winged status as idea, there will be no saving the union from ultimate disfiguration. Patmore's amatory poems are long and wonderfully knowing treatises on the *ars amandi*. There is more of concrete value to married people in them than in any treatises I know.

But of course the male must be an artist. Patmore makes this point brutally and bluntly. Love,

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he repeats, is possible only among cultivated people; the "rabble" will always gyrate between bestiality and prudishness. For this reason the *decor* of "The Angel in the House," which seems to so many of us hopelessly dated and prim, is so very important. Patmore wanted—indeed, had to—stress the etiquette of courtship and marriage by revealing its affinity with any other "style." It is not a matter of knowing and certainly not of research. One may know Freud by heart and still remain so much of a boor that marriage will be a ridiculous failure. Patmore's idea resembles Newman's "gentleman," who also makes the point that formalities, in themselves meaningless and a bit funny, bear an affinity to the necessary personal ritual of the religious soul.

It was this feeling and something more which awakened in the poet that fierce anti-democracy by reason of which he resembles Beckford and the French Catholic novelists of the 'nineties though he is otherwise quite unlike them (but, curiously, he is like Beckford again in his passion for a house and landscape). Ruskin took Patmore to task for his unwillingness to help reform the "morass" which was everywhere about them, but no advice ever fell on ears more deaf. "The Unknown Eros" is notable for nothing more than the bitterness of its attack upon English society, which consists of bad prophets and "oases of wild grapes." And the prose is even more vehement. In all this the specific industrial phenomena—mechanically employed illiterates, seeking Dionysius in too many mugs of beer and love in a picnic debauch—are hardly touched upon. It is the impurity (physical, ethical, formal and spiritual) of the bourgeoisie, including the Catholic and clerical bourgeoisie, which disgusts him.

We are now in a position to estimate the relation which Patmore's work bears to his time. There is, first of all, a direct affinity between his understanding of love and his criticism of society. Love is not merely a feeling, a passion or a sensation, but the man-woman duality active. This duality in turn is not sufficient unto itself, but is contingent upon a cosmic duality (matter and form) on the one hand and a spiritual duality (God and the soul) upon the other. But modern society, the poet realizes, was no longer expressive of consciousness of these dualities. One of the most important human effects was the misplacement of woman. I think that an essay by Siegram Schultze, a German professor now forgotten, ("Wege und Ziele deutscher Literatur und Kunst," Berlin, 1897) was one of the first to deduce from observation of late nineteenth-century art the evidence for a fateful and disquieting change in the cultural status of woman. "The history of the nineteenth century," he wrote, "bears a feminine stamp despite its great and bitterly fought wars." It is of course natural that Professor Schulze was led to attribute what was particularly undesirable in this trend to "French and Semitic influences." The exaltation of sex passion, of free amours and of *feconde virginité par l'amour* was, he declared, the creation of Heine and Paris. But though our professor was somewhat blind to causes, he was correct in one respect. The increasing tendency on the part of woman to seek happiness outside the marriage bond, whether in bustling business-woman virginity or in more or less delightful liaisons, was not traceable to the Renaissance but to the development of a society which for most Germans of the nineteenth century was still that of the "West." For the point was not male delight in the female body (which is as old as the world), or sin to which lovers are led, but radical and heterodox confusion concerning the emancipation of woman.

Werner Sombart has outlined conclusively the manner in which luxury—in the full sense of the term—accompanied the development of capitalism. The buying of pleasure (he says) gradually supplanted the creation of pleasure, until during the eighteenth century the chief distinction of a dissolute and venal cleric of Paris was the number of his mistresses. But the bourgeoisie never admitted the truth. It continued to act as if the issue were the education of women (as if women had never been educated), or the status of woman in industry (which left them in unparalleled need of protection). Indeed, for a time it laid so much stress on respect for the conventions that propriety became the chief among virtues. But underneath this hypocrisy and primness what floods of human and moral misery sought for release! Tennyson's women are creatures repressed by "modesty" into lovable Elaines at whom old Malory would have stared incredulously. Hardy's Tess was a girl caught in the toils of those cheap *ipse dixits* and formalities which even among Christians sometimes passed for civilization. And the end of it all was a mad scramble for divorce and the rights of passion: a scramble by women who had forgotten what love is to get rid of men who—*vide* a no longer quite intelligible "Doll's House"—knew no difference between a wife and a bottle of schnaps.

A poet like Patmore could not, if he trusted an instinct which more than compensated for a lack of historical knowledge, attack the degradation of love without making war also upon the society to which that degradation was in a measure attributable. Nevertheless that attack was always, as we have seen, merely a sortie made by the defender of something beyond price, which is one of the positive truths which Catholic faith has to offer the world. And it will always be a sufficient index to the extent to which men have drifted into the pallor of bourgeois ideals to note how they face Patmore.

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"MANDATES"

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

IT IS the fashion to say, too curtly, that history does not repeat itself. Literally it does not, for nothing else ever does either. But, similarly placed, man acts similarly. The reason is that human nature does not change. Passing years, passing events, passing fashions, new deals, new freedoms, leave human nature static. The changes are in the outward manifestations; when you ride in your new car you are doing the same thing your grandfather did when he took out his horse and buggy.

The example of this fact to which this article is devoted is the presumably eternal manifestation of man's confidence in the obviousness and positiveness of what he calls "mandates" in election returns. Next November, as always, there will be a chorus proclaiming what was the mandate given to Landon or Roosevelt; at first a discordant chorus over the radio, in the editorial columns, on the floor of Congress, and in barrooms and on street corners, but in almost no time it will be generally agreed what the mandate was. What will bring about the general agreement will not be the ascertained facts but the relative loudness of the contending voices.

This would be of no great importance if it were not that for the next four years both government and unofficial interpretation always take it as a fact that they have ascertained what the mandate was and shape their course accordingly; and, alas, this makes history. If the mute millions didn't mean to give that particular mandate and are consequently still unsatisfied, they have no way of saying so except, two years hence, to turn out the House of Representatives that has misunderstood what they were trying to say, and with it one-third of the Senate; a clumsy way of saying, "That wasn't what I told you to do, at all," but the only way under our system. When this happens, as it often does, it never occurs to the mandate-oracles that they had guessed wrong; on the contrary, they write books about the fickleness of the American voter. It passes into history, too, worse luck.

If what now follows seems to be personal reminiscence, and to relate to the relatively uninteresting past, it is only reminiscence north-northwest; it would not be written if it was not news about 1936 disguised under an earlier date-line. I abhor writing reminiscence as reminiscence and never have done it and never will. Illustration, however, is always more convincing than assertion, and in this mandate matter human nature does not change from election to election; if it seems to, *plus ça change plus c'est la meme chose.* If you think at first that I am writing ancient history, have the patience to read on and you will find that what I am writing about is 1936 and 1932.

As a first example, it is believed by history (and, said Count Joseph de Maistre, "history has been for 300 years an uninterrupted conspiracy against the truth") that Blaine's defeat by Cleveland in 1884 was caused by the outraged consciences of incorruptible Republicans. It was a great moral uprising. History didn't invent this; it was discovered for all time by the mandate-finders of 1884 itself, and as usual the more loud-voiced finders settled the matter for history. The Republican party had been immovably enthroned for a quarter of a century and seemed eternally enthroned; but the virtuous among them bolted, led by apostles of purity like Carl Schurz, because Blaine had taken stock in an obscure railroad whose affairs were affected by congressional action. (Odd, it had not occurred to them, four years before, to bolt Garfield, who was proved to have done the same with the Union Pacific's alias, the notorious Credit Mobilier; whereas nothing had ever been proved against Blaine.)

Great victory for the Ten Commandments, that was. Was it? Blaine was defeated solely by the electoral vote of New York, and Cleveland's plurality there was 1,079. The Ten Commandments would have been overthrown by a mandate if 536 votes had gone the other way. And Blaine was not defeated; he was elected. Ten years later, at Boss McKane's trial for election frauds, it came out that, ruling outside the law in Gravesend (which had a voting population of much less than 1,000 at that time), he had annually recorded many thousands of non-existent votes. It was, therefore, those votes which never were cast which lined up the United States for civic purity —by a fraudulent plurality of 1,079.

Did the bolters bolt because they couldn't stomach Blaine's shares of stock in an unknown Southwestern railroad? In that campaign, which New Yorkers; they were all business men; they used to hear my elders talking. They were all New Yorkers; they were all business men; they had all voted consistently Republican since Lincoln's first election. But they were not going to vote for Blaine. Why not? Because he was not honest enough? No, they never even mentioned that subject; business had been bad ever since the panic of 1873, and, as they expressed it in all their talks, "business needs a change."

That was the deciding reason; but in all that campaign you never heard the deciding reason

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mentioned on the stump or in the newspapers; it was all the dishonesty of Blaine—an issue, by the way, which did not figure in discussion at all until he was actually nominated. The bolters had been preparing to bolt anyway, expecting President Arthur to be nominated, but it turned out to be Blaine, so the nominal issue on which to bolt was changed from Arthur's machine to Blaine's personality—because Blaine, unlike Arthur, had no machine. History obediently accepted at their own valuation the interpretation the bolters gave in 1884 of the mandate.

That, however, was only my first gleam of light on mandates, and light on them continued to irradiate me in the elections of the next half century. In 1896, for example, the mandate was against free silver; so the mandate-finders announced after election, and so obedient history has recorded. Again the issue was moral. The patriots of the land were incessantly adjured to vote against staining America's pure honor. Bryan stood for a swindling dollar against an honest one, for the defrauding of creditors. Research lately has proved that in fact Bryan got more votes than any other Democrat could have got in that year, and won back prospective bolters instead of alienating them. But let that pass.

What was it, if not free silver, that defeated Bryan? What defeated Blaine, or rather did not defeat him, was the long-continuing languor of business after the panic of 1873. In 1893, too, there had been a great panic. It began just as Cleveland entered office in that year, and hard times—what we now call "the depression"—had deepened in the three subsequent years. The people blamed the party in power for it, just as in 1840 they turned out President Van Buren because of the great panic which began just as he took office in 1837.

As election was nearing in that year, 1896, I overheard two unlettered workingmen talking. Both seemed to be Democrats. One was repeating what he had heard or read about the advantages of free silver. The other said only one thing, but he said it in monotonous repetition each time the first ended a sentence. What he said, over and over again, was, "Did you ever have good times under a Democratic President?" Vainly did the first leave the question unanswered and start something more about what he had heard were the issues; and as that one question kept hammering home, he weakened more and more, and finally submitted. He was conquered; and after all, his heart was not in it. This was the issue that decided the election in that year of depression; but History, a slow-paced Muse, has not found it out yet.

Space grows too short for me to list the other years in which the same thing proved true, and I hurry to 1932. Again, as before, what decided that election was the depression and nothing else. A few months ago ex-Governor Pinchot was heatedly assuring the world that the mandate of 1932 was the people's demand for reform, for a new deal; Nicholas Murray Butler was adjuring the Republicans to heed the mandate and so avoid "the fate of the Whig party" (though the Whigs had won the preceding election and so had no mandate to frighten them); and Senator Borah was sure the mandate had been one to drop "the old sham battle" between the two parties. Neither they nor the other mandate-finders, including President Roosevelt, ever explained why the millions of Republican bolters in 1932 were not just as tired of "the old sham battle" when they gave Harding in 1920, Coolidge in 1924, and Hoover in 1928, the majestic millions they did give them. They suddenly got tired of "the old sham battle" in 1932 and no sooner, and all at once.

It was all of two months before Roosevelt was nominated in 1932. I was living in a little village in a farm community in the then reliable old Republican state of Maine. The country post office there was, as it often is in the country, the news exchange. Grouped in it that day were men who had come there without purpose: farmers, village storekeepers, the local garage-keeper, and the like, a good cross-section of sentiment in that rural Republican county. Of course the talk was all about the hard times, the depression, and the various ways in which it was hitting each of the talkers. The talk grew ever gloomier; and at last the postmaster, rising, ended it by saying, "Well, we'll see if Roosevelt will make it any better." That sentence spoke for them all. Roosevelt had not been nominated yet, but he was evidently going to be; and if some other Democrat, Ritchie for instance, had been the destined candidate, his name and not Roosevelt's would have been uttered. Roosevelt was then not known as an economic reformer and certainly not as a New Dealer; he was solely the man who had twice carried the seemingly necessary State of New York, and who therefore would presumably carry it again.

In that whole talk, and in all the other talk I heard in Maine, not one word did I hear of reform, the more abundant life, a new deal or even of progress; and though I returned to live again in New York a month later and lived there through the campaign, and talked with many John Does, not a word did I hear that differed in any respect from the feeling expressed in that conclusive sentence of the village postmaster's. Rural or urban, industrial or agricultural, the thought everywhere was the same. In 1932, the people did not have anything in their minds except their flattening pocketbooks; they were not one whit more anxious for any imaginable kind of reform or any thinkable new deal, or even for

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any slight change, than they had been four years before when they so overwhelmingly elected Hoover, or eight years before when they did the same for Coolidge. In that last-mentioned year the spellbinders thought the issue was the oil scandal, but after election day the most ardent mandate-finder could not discover in the returns even the vestige of an evidence that the voters had been thinking either one way or the other about Teapot Dome, or about anything except "Coolidge prosperity"; in plainer words, about their personal pocket-books.

Nevertheless, next November the issue-makers and the mandate-finders will find again, as they always have, a mandate to Landon or Roosevelt to do something or other which the voters were not thinking about at all except as an interesting subject of conversation whenever the radio became monotonous or had too much static. There is no harm in mandate-finding as a pleasing mental exercise; where it works harm is where the individuals whom an election has placed in power take it seriously and manage the government in accordance with what the majority of the mandate-finders agree has been the mandate. And the sad thing is that they always do. Under our system, the voters have no way of telling them they got the mandate wrong until the next election of a Congress; and when the voters do this, as they often have done, the explanation always offered is that the voters are a wayward lot and change their minds every two years.

THE ENDANGERED PRESS

By JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI

"THE FREEDOM of the press" is a shibboleth in America. Occasionally the fourth estate raises this battle cry but its freedom, save in isolated sections, has never been gravely imperiled from without. During the present administration new alarums have been repeatedly sounded. But the excitement has not extended perceptibly beyond editorial pages for the simple reason that no serious situation has arisen and the public has refused to follow the tocsins. In these modern days when news gathering penetrates to all nooks and crannies of the country and the world, more and more people are coming into contact with the "gentlemen" of the press. Perhaps in their minds is being born the suspicion that the press is not apt to suffer from loss of freedom; indeed one could muster an ever-increasing body of opinion which holds that the press gets beyond freedom and shows a strong tendency toward license. No institution, on one hand jealously safeguarding its prerogatives, has on the other so flagrantly invited restriction of some of its more extreme practises. Continuance of these constitutes a danger which is more real than many publishers are apt to realize.

That there are boundaries beyond which the press may not go with impunity is evident in the existence of libel laws. Suits based on them are more numerous than is generally realized by the public. The accused journal naturally does not publicize its court appearances and an unwritten rule in newspaperdom keeps the majority of such accounts out of all columns. Libel laws have undergone gradual changes, it is true: formerly the individual was protected from statements which injured him irrespective of their truth; today he is guarded against false allegations. But it is noteworthy that the press, in a unity of action, does suppress news which it fears.

Few realize, and the press is careful not to give information as to, the individual's rights in the publication of his picture. Yet the courts are open to those who are indignant, courageous and alert enough to take action when their rights have been violated through publication of "stolen" pictures which have harmed their reputations. One might cynically observe that more cases of this kind might occur were the vast majority of people not so publicity-crazed. Crimes very rarely have been committed for the sole purpose of gaining notoriety; nevertheless many criminals are eager for their "press." A new class, described pungently as "publicity hounds," has sprung into being and to its members almost any newspaper mention is highly desirable. Today those who do not even seek selective publicity are unique.

But for those who do not wish their names and photographs to become public property in any but a manner pleasing to them, legal protection is scanty and not available in many instances without almost prohibitive expense. It is evident that, with the present tendency of newspaper publishing, which weeds out the smaller and less well-financed journals and produces great combines through chains, the difficulties of successful suing increases. There is no inference here that wealth can buy its way through the courts; yet there are influences more subtle than "fixing," which plays a part disadvantageous to a plaintiff.

No newspaper actually wants to lose a libel suit. It may avoid the most direct airing of its defeat but a history of the case finds its way into court reports and constitutes a record which is at least available to lawyers. However, where it must

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pay considerable damages, the penalty does not prove to be a deterrent for the future. Not many journals are in the position, for instance, of the *Churchman,* which recently was put into desperate straits by its loss of a libel suit and was narrowly saved from complete suspension. Were penalties sufficiently forbidding, the basis for libel suits would become very much fewer than they are today. A publisher can even argue that the increased circulation resulting from a particularly spicy piece of scandal will more than offset the possibilities (not necessarily the certainty) of a libel suit to follow. Demonstration of the fact that the press has had legal restrictions placed on it must be followed by the conclusion that these restrictions do provide loopholes.

In those cases where vigorous warnings that the freedom of the press is imperiled—the situation in Louisiana under Huey Long and in Minnesota prior to Governor Olsen's administration may be cited as recent instances—the issue lay largely in the right to publish news, that is, facts, in perfect freedom. Of course editorial policy is really at the root of the difficulties. If a journal is honestly reporting news, not suppressing that which is advantageous to the opponents of its editorial cause and featuring that which furthers the cause, it is properly fulfilling its news-purveying purposes. It continues to do this no matter how partizan may be its editorials. In the majority of instances when it is attacked, the attack is indirect rather than direct. It is threatened with punitive laws or economic loss because its editorial policy is a weapon against the enemy which seeks its silencing.

Here the public is wholeheartedly on the side of the publisher. Its full influence may not be immediately exercised, the danger of curtailment of press freedom may exist acutely, but eventually freedom has been won. Yet the public, with the true facts before it, will be much less inclined to go to the defense of those publications which allow an editorial policy to pervert their presentation of news. The conscientious publisher is constantly watchful to keep partiality out of his news columns. In this regard he is with the majority, as could be determined from any scanning of political news in American newspapers. It is true that he may commit sins of omission but these more often arise from mistaken, not deliberately assumed, viewpoints. Nevertheless his majority is thinning. There has been more tendency in the last few years toward the dominance of the news columns by the editorial office. This can be noted in papers which have followed the example of Hearst, always one of the worst offenders, at one extreme; and in the New York *Times'* treatment of the religious persecutions in Germany as contrasted with those in Mexico, at the other.

Whereas the practise of editorial control of news should be challenged, the desirability of its perfect freedom of expression, confined to its proper field, cannot be disputed. Few in America would wish to see it curtailed. Where editorial freedom has been gravely endangered, more gravely than through any outside source, was pointed out in a brilliant speech made before the Associated Press Convention last spring by Sir Wilmott Lewis, Washington correspondent of the London Times. "The danger," he said, "which confronts what we call the freedom of the press is not chiefly from without, for that we can meet, but from within." This danger is an outcome of the "increasing integration of the newspaper system" so that extraordinary power over public opinion is wielded by the few rather than the many.

> . . . There has never lived, and never will be born, a man wise and good enough to be entrusted with irresponsible power over human thought, and the action which follows thought, which ownership of many newspapers conveys in the modern world, and the freedom to exercise it in the service of his interests. To say that his interests might also be those of the community is to say something which might periodically be true, but cannot be generally true.

This speech was given due news space in some metropolitan papers but editorial comment on it was eloquent through its omission. The record did not show that the convention seriously discussed the problem which Sir Wilmott Lewis said confronted the press, even in England and America.

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler also wrote recently that violation of the freedom of the press

> . . . may be done formally or informally by governments, but it may also be done by endowed or well-intrenched propagandists who, instead of recording the news as it really is, record it in the form of their own biased and propagandist interpretations. Such a press is quite as much controlled and unfree as is a press which is under the heel of a despot.

The freedom of the press has had its fullest flower in the independence of many publishers and through them of their editorial writers. The owner-editor may have been misguided in many of his opinions but they were his own. As a class he still predominates in this country, but the economic struggle has played havoc with many, and in the larger cities the mortality rate has been even higher. One might brutally argue that the law of the survival of the fittest is operating, but even with that condoned the argument is not sound. For absorption into a chain, rather than the disappearance of a journal, is more largely the order of the day. And with such absorption goes the most valuable part of the journal's independence. The expression of opinion is lessened because one man becomes the spokesman in place of many men. That the editorials of one newspaper in a chain will be echoes, if not duplicates, of those controlled by the publisher is almost axiomatic. There may be vigor of expression, even if

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the treatment uses appeal to mass emotions, but the increase of the influence of one voice sacrifices many locally, if not nationally, influential.

America has yet to see the same "plutocracy of the press" which exists today in England, but the trend is decidedly in that direction. How this can be stopped or reversed is a part of what Graham Wallas, British philosopher, called "the most insoluble problem of democracy." The owner of a group of papers is responsible to no one, yet possesses the use of greater power than any other. Nothing in his position necessitates his determination that what he says, no matter how thoroughly he may believe it, is well founded. If he is a man of violent bias and intolerance, of indifference to the public welfare, only prudence dictated by financial facts will serve as a check. Such prudence is a singularly poor preceptor when the public desire to arrive at the truth is concerned. And even where his personality is not directly dominant in every department of his paper, it is exercised in the appointment of those whose duties leave very little room for independence. The docile, rather than the responsibly expert, man his staffs.

Even those journals which are noted for their conservatism are open to charges, less serious perhaps because they are not the general rule, in the matter of coloring news. This occurs largely through a lack of alert jurisdiction over every department of the paper. The managers of a modern newspaper have a tremendous job and those in control cannot be read out of court if occasional lapses occur. Yet case after case of continued writing from a partial standpoint can be cited against the most conservative: correspondents who are deliberately embodying their own viewpoint, and hence their philosophy, in daily dispatches; the constant suppression of news which is more vital to the public than one-half the accounts included; the playing up of an item, prejudicial to a group, which is entirely out of proportion to its value; the editing of critical columns in which the tastes of millions of people are molded, now boldly, now insidiously, to the pattern of philosophies which are foreign, if not repugnant, to the paper's general character.

The intelligent reader is not slow to recognize these departures from the ideal and quicker to recognize that there are very few daily newspapers in this country which do not offend against their own self-declared policies. One cannot justly insist on perfection. A machine of which men are the integral parts naturally suffers from the fallibleness of the individual. Yet there would be very much more encouragement in the situation if those who are responsible would demonstrate that they know the need for constant insistence on impartiality in all departments, for constant vigilance to present news as undistorted facts.

THE THREE JEWS

By NATHALIE TROUBETSKOY

THERE were three of them—three musketeers of a remote and sleepy village in Poland. Abraham, Moses and Isaak, or 'Brumka, Moshka and Icka.

'Brumka was the oldest, and he was very old indeed, old and wise as the Patriarch himself. No one knew where he came from, or where he went to, and it seemed there was no need of a settled abode for him, for he never rested. He was the village carrier and general purveyor to the uninitiated, to others a winged messenger and miracle-worker. He carried his goods in a huge basket, covered with a tattered tarpaulin, and when he set his load down, his weary old body remained at the same acute painful angle for some time. Swift, soundless and surprisingly neat feet were his only means of travel, yet he covered incredible distances in incredibly short times. He always seemed to come with the worst weather; sometimes merged into a slanting sheet of rain, the dingy Iaddishe long-coat lashed to his thin form, till it looked like a streak of muddy water in the distance; sometimes wrapped up in the whirligig of a blizzard, the skirts of the "lapserdack" grey and billowing, the long white beard floating into fantastic curves round his uncovered white head. It was a beautiful head, as if from an ancient, fine Bible, despite the red-rimmed, sad eyes, disfigured by the blight of most children of the crowded, airless slums of Warsaw. But the beard was brushed and spotless, the side curls oiled and silky.

It was a wonder that the fragile old man survived the rigors of a Polish winter, always on the road, and Heaven only knew what scanty clothing under the long, threadbare coat. He would drift in on a gust of wind and stand bent, rocking with fatigue, while frozen tears melted in his bloodshot eyes and ran down into his feathery beard. Shaking and claw-like hands would fumble with the cord of the basket, and lo and behold, wonderful things appeared: caviar from Astrakhan and lavender water from London, partridges from Siberia, priceless cognac from France. Smuggled goods, evidently, but how they reached that tiny village, or how 'Brumka reached the nearest city, Lublin, twenty miles away, remained a mystery.

He had no hidden store, as far as one knew, and no local shops, even in Warsaw, could produce the epicurean treasures that came from that enchanted basket. He always said he could provide anything at a moment's notice, and it was not a boast, for did he not flit back one stormy evening with a whole sturgeon, when even a train from Warsaw could not have done it in the time! He also carried news by some strange and secret means, like the African drums, and would tell of things that happened far away and nearly at the time he spoke. He brought things that children loved, and longed for, in that simple land: oranges, bananas, Turkish delight, dates and figs.

He would never eat, or sit down, but, business quickly and efficiently done, out he would drift again into the unknown, a pathetic yet disquieting figure. Some said

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that he was fabulously rich, some that he was agonizingly poor, but 'Brumka never spoke about himself.

Moshka was very different. A red-headed, ruddy young giant, with the face and shoulders of an ox. He may have taken on his aspect from his work, that of felling cattle for meat with one primitive blow of an axe. He had a good butcher's round, a greasy white overall over a ready-made, florid suit, and tore about the country in a rickety cart drawn by the white skeleton of a horse. The whole contraption rattled and rocked, the wheels and the old mare hung on to life by a thread, Moshka's rich red beard blazed in the sunshine, and piercing cackles came from the live chickens under the precarious seat.

One spring morning, my mother and I were standing on the terrace when, to our amazement, Moshka's crazy cart came straight up the drive to the house, instead of swerving as if shot to the kitchen quarters. Horse and cart stopped with a rattle of bones and old iron, and stood quivering as if threatened with immediate dissolution; Moshka, his face and beard in a flame, scrambled down awkwardly. His suit was new and dangerously tight. Advancing shyly toward us, he held out a faintly pink, damp bundle of white linen, unpleasantly reminiscent of murdered babies. As my fastidious mother took the parcel, a pallid stream of blood ran down her sleeve.

"My lady," said Moshka, "today is my wedding, and I have killed a beautiful calf. This is a hind leg. I sat on it all the way, so it is nice and warm and tender. And would you, please, come to the feast this evening?"

Most of the household went, thoroughly enjoying the quaint, old-time wedding feast, for Moshka, kind and honest, was liked and respected by us all. Later the young wife, blooming with the expansive beauty of Jewish maidenhood, sloe-eyed and crimson mouthed, would be seen sometimes sitting outside their cottage, while her husband slashed at shuddering dead bulls and silent love lambs. It was sad to think that in a few years this would be a fat, voluble shrew with a row of whining Moshkes and Haneles, instead of wings of girlish fancy.

The third and youngest was Icka, young Isaak, with the face of a suffering Christ, the husky, gentle voice of a consumptive, and a boundless love for little children and small animals. He was the son of a village cobbler and came from a less grimy and sordid home, as he was the only one spared, so far, by the swift and cruel scourge of his people—consumption. His sagacity and beautiful voice had made him a reader or cantor at the synagog. He did not share the sweated labor and crude pleasures of other Jewish youths, and spent his leisure between books and our house. To those who know the unsurmountable barrier between the Ghetto and the Gentiles, it was a never-ceasing wonder. Icka first came with mended shoes, somehow came again, and stayed. Like old 'Brumka, he appeared to live on air, as he could not eat our food, but there was always a comfortable chair by the kitchen fire for him. We wondered about the elusive 'Brumka, we respected the thrifty Moshka, but we loved Icka.

Often coming down to dessert, I would pause on the broad stairs, to listen to his soft humming in the pantry. He had supple, tender hands, and the fussy old butler would rather trust the Bohemian goblets and Sevres cups to Icka than to the clumsy young footmen. It was a strange sight, the slim young Jew, with his short golden beard, long hair and side curls, in a regulation black alpaca "lapserdack" down to his toes, and a white apron round his middle, delicately polishing the scintillating crystal and glass. And the radiance of his smile, when I asked him to tell me a story! Icka, the strange interlude in a smooth and ordinary existence, willing, timid, yet strong enough to break his own and our traditions; Icka, of the wondrous tales and gentle ways.

Haytime Symphony

Twenty locusts scream in unison,
Octaves up and up their trebles run
And vanish, leaving utter silences,
Except for sleepy language of hot bees
And the endless clicking, far and clean,
Of the traveling teeth in the machine.
Up the long ocean of the billowing hill
The monster insect comes, the sea grows still,
The grassy waves subside to sudden calm,
And silenced is the thousand-throated psalm.
Daisies with their staring eyes go down,
Hawkweed with bonfires for a crown,
Red clovers stand with honey in their breath,
And all at once stand parallel in death.
The bluegrass with small pumpkins for its seeds,
Goldenrod unblossomed, blossomed weeds,
Rank on rank together bow and fall.
Sunless universes and creatures small
As grains of pollen that inhabit there
Are ruined in an instant in the glare,
And all their tiny altars are laid bare.
Small deities of gloom sink in surprise
With the sunlight in their dying eyes.
The iron monster chews its even way
And lets in on a green world cruel day.
Marble Andes tower twelve miles high
And change their peaks like yeast foam in the sky,
Standing over earth in their white row,
The peaks turn into blossoms, swell and grow,
Too bright to look at and too vast to scan.
Before the minute shouting of a man
Perched on a nothing in the gilded light,
Great horses come with curving necks and white
Foam upon their mouths and hooves that bite
Into a world which quivers with its heat.
The world is amber and the world tastes sweet,
The world is sudden death and bluebirds crying
Above the hidden nest in ruins lying,
Swallows cutting the air and moth wings flying.
Sunlight on a scythe like a sheet of fire,
Thunderheads building up higher and higher,
Showers coming on with distant drums,
A tuft in shadow where a bright bee hums,
Fields growing smaller, and the locusts' screams,
And men in sweat and horses dark as dreams.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—*L'Osservatore Romano* announced, October 10, that His Eminence Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, formerly Bishop of Nueva Segovia, and of Jaro, in the Philippines, had been named Legate of His Holiness Pope Pius XI to the thirty-third International Eucharistic Congress at Manila, February 3 to 7 * * * Father Stanford of Villanova and Father O'Hara of Notre Dame have announced that a Mass for Peace will be said October 25, the feast of Christ the King, in their respective chapels. This day has been designated as peace day in the nation's Catholic colleges by the *Christian Front* and the Catholic Association for International Peace. The *Catholic Worker* is forming a group of conscientious objectors similar to an organization recently begun in England under the leadership of E. I. Watkin. * * * Reverend John Laures, S.J., of the Catholic University of Tokyo, has recently brought to light a number of rare books published by the Jesuits in Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; of the seven most important prints found in the library of one of the Catholic churches of Peiping six are still in their original binding. * * * In the past ten years, 500 members of the Little Flower Mission Circle, organized in New York by a Redemptorist to foster missionary vocations among girls, have entered 70 religious orders. * * * George Bernard Shaw, J. M. Barrie, Robert Lynd and Walter de la Mare are among the notable English non-Catholic writers who have signed an appeal sent to the press for funds to complete the Catholic church at Beaconsfield as a memorial to the late G. K. Chesterton. * * * A number of Catholic chaplains at state and federal penitentiaries are attending a two-week Institute for Prison Chaplains at the Catholic University School of Social Work at Washington, D. C. * * * At the opening of the court year in New York, 500 judges and lawyers assisted at a votive Mass of the Holy Ghost sponsored by the Guild of Catholic Lawyers to invoke divine guidance during the coming year. * * * Archbishop Rummel of New Orleans has just inaugurated a comprehensive Catholic Youth Movement and the work of organizing parish units in the archdiocese will begin at once. * * * The Catholic Truth Society of Hongkong has recently published an eighty-page catechism with English and Chinese texts printed side by side. It was produced by the Nazareth Press at Hongkong, conducted by the Paris Foreign Mission Society.

The Nation.—Presidential candidates were giving campaign addresses almost every day. President Roosevelt strongly supported the tariff reductions secured through the Hull treaties while Landon attacked them for letting in foreign farm produce. Roosevelt outlined a four-point farm program: conservation against land wastage and soil impoverishment; increasing general consumer purchasing power for its own sake and to widen the domestic market; an attack on tenancy; crop insurance. Landon spoke for conservation while attacking New Deal methods for the same. In Kansas, the President promised the blossoming of his security methods. Landon reiterated his pledge to balance the budget even during his speech on relief, stressing that private business must be unhindered in bringing reemployment. Chairman Hamilton lamented that Republicans are afraid to make party contributions because of possible New Deal reprisals. * * * A survey of the nation's colleges showed wide gains in enrolment. Eastern colleges show a 3.4 percent gain; Western, 8.2 percent; Southern, 6.0 percent. * * * The future status of the Philippines is said to be causing a debate between the American army and navy. The navy wants to maintain a fort there permanently, while the army believes our defense line should be drawn from Alaska to Hawaii to Panama. * * * The United States Supreme Court refused a rehearing on its decision that the New York State minimum wage law for women is unconstitutional. * * * Jesse H. Jones, chairman of the RFC, proclaimed that "there is no emergency now," and that the banks are in "fine condition." He announced that disbursements of the RFC from February 2, 1932, when it was started, until the end of September this year, not including advances to governmental agencies or those for direct relief, were $6,251,977,669. Of this, $4,021,931,206, or 67 percent, has been repaid. * * * WPA Administrator Hopkins, in answer to repeated demands by Republican campaigners, published an accounting showing that total WPA costs up to September 1 were $1,772,756,795. The administrative costs, not counting the Washington office, were $72,315,997, or 4.1 percent. The Washington costs would bring them up to 4.5 percent. The New York City total was $269,401,837; New York State, exclusive of the city, $80,774,476. Pennsylvania was second, the figure being $183,217,290; Ohio third, at $121,938,640. * * * Officials of the International Longshoremen's Association and of six other waterfront unions are taking a referendum of West Coast martime labor asking for authorization to call a strike on October 28, "if no satisfactory agreement is reached" with employers on "fundamental issues." The union leaders consider the activities of the Federal Maritime Commission improper and believe the employers are attempting to take away "some of the gains made in the past."

The Wide World.—Consolidating their positions south and west of Madrid, the armies commanded by General Franco gained a certain amount of territory but avoided every semblance of a major military operation. The insurgent garrison at Oviedo was hard pressed but evidently in no immediate danger of extinction. Reports indicated that lassitude was the principal characteristic of large sections of the metropolitan population, which had to put up with serious curtailments of the water and food supply. * * * International attitude toward the con-

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flict in Spain were aired at a London meeting called to debate alleged violations of the non-intervention pact. Russia threatened to withdraw unless Germany, Italy and Portugal, accused by the Madrid government of lending support to the Franco cause, were brought to book. It was decided that the three be asked to explain. Russia threatened to bolt the pact unless Germany in particular changed its tactics. The Portuguese representative walked out of the committee meeting, and there were reports that the British would abandon neutrality unless the pact was enforced. * * * The French government, profiting by devaluation, was in a much sounder budgetary position and the general business outlook was good. But there was considerable political strife as extremists feinted for greater influence. Action was taken against Colonel La Rocque's French Social party. The government announced that the Colonel and his aides would be tried for having kept alive, under another name, Fascist organizations proscribed by law. It was assumed that the government's intention was to smash the La Rocque front by undertaking to prove that a revolt had been planned in Africa. Meanwhile Communist demonstrators caused no end of trouble in Alsace-Lorraine. Organizers were persuaded to reduce the number of meetings to ten, and these government troops undertook to protect. But feeling ran high in Metz and Strassbourg. The German government protested against attacks on Hitler made by Communist orators. * * * Great Britain submitted to the United States a request that fortifications in the Pacific be stabilized both in number and strength. The move was viewed generally as a friendly act but as one incorporating no principle of value to this country. * * * The position of the Austrian government seemed considerably stronger when, following a stormy Cabinet session, Prince Starhemberg agreed to dissolution of the Heimwehr. This, the strongest of Austria's private political armies, is to be incorporated in the new "national militia," control of which is lodged with Chancellor Schuschnigg. The move, attributable in part to Heimwehr dissension, was understood to have the approval of Mussolini. * * * A storm of unparalleled severity swept over the island of Luzon, imperiling many villages in the Nueva Ecija region. It was estimated that the total number of dead would exceed 350. Rumors suggested that the casualty list might even prove this the worst catastrophe in Philippine history.

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Cardinal Pacelli's Visit.—The visit of Cardinal Pacelli, the first of a Papal Secretary of State to our country, was being made in a very definitely private manner. The Cardinal gave an interview on the incoming boat "as a sort of 'journalistic tax of entry' into the United States." He said that "the duties of my office have brought me into many countries and have given me an insight into the soul of many peoples. What then could be more natural for me than the desire to know at first hand also this great and powerful nation which holds such a unique and important place among all the peoples of the world; which, by its energy and its vast territory, by the force of its labor and organization, by its ideals and its sense of reality, by its inexhaustible sources of wealth and by its progress, has done such great things in the past and promises so much for the future, not only for this country but also for all humanity?" Speaking of the Pope and of the Church, he continued: "Outside and above all conflict of parties whose interests are purely earthly, the voice of the Father of Christendom is raised, amid struggles of the present hour, to warn humanity that it is following and will follow the wrong road if it refuses to recognize and to observe the noble and pure doctrine of the Gospel. . . . While she thus carries on her mission she has no desire to hinder or impede real prosperity or sane liberty among the people but strives to secure that harmony between earthly activity and eternal destiny from which alone can come, in all its fullness, the welfare of the individual and of society. . . . Within its confines there is a field for labor and progress infinitely vast in which the geniality of the statesman, the strength of the organizer, the intuition of the inventor, the hunger for truth of the thinker, the thirst for beauty of the artist can freely develop, as also the modest daily labor of the millions of human beings without name from whose work and sacrifices, from whose renunciations and sorrows, the manifold life of a nation is formed no less than from deeds of the great immortalized in pages of history. I am indeed happy to find myself within the territory of a great people who know how to unite so beautifully and nobly a sense of discipline with the exercise of a just, legitimate and well-ordered liberty."

Monsignor Ryan vs. Father Coughlin.—Speaking under the auspices of the Democratic National Committee on the evening of October 7, Monsignor John A. Ryan said that statements to the effect that President Roosevelt is a Communist were "ugly, cowardly and flagrant calumnies." He appended an attack on the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin. After some allusion to his own experience in the realm of social reform, he said: "In the light of this experience, I say deliberately to the laboring men and women of America that Father Coughlin's explanation of our economic maladies is at least 50 percent wrong, and that his monetary remedies are at least 90 percent wrong." He also added that the papal encyclicals did not support the Third Party conclusions. On October 10, Father Coughlin replied, referring to Monsignor Ryan as "the right reverend New Dealer." He asserted that although President Roosevelt was not a Communist he had "communistic tendencies," and offered by way of proof the charter of a corporation which, he said, had been established in Delaware under New Deal auspices. This charter had, he declared, been withheld from the "files of Delaware" by the administration; but it nevertheless existed and made possible "acquisition of private property by any means whatsoever." According to Father Coughlin, Monsignor Ryan "compromised himself" by speaking under Democratic auspices. The next day Dr. Ryan returned to the radio front and said that according to the pre-election polls, "11 percent too many" Catholics were going to vote the Lemke ticket. He maintained that the papal encyclicals did not support Father Coughlin's theories of money and credit, and denied that the "private

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control" of these were bringing about in the United States the conditions against which the Sovereign Pontiff complained. Speaking the next day at Boston, Massachusetts, Father Coughlin reiterated his contentions that the encyclicals did form the basis of his demands for a new monetary and credit system. He added that Monsignor Ryan had "stultified himself by not knowing the primary principles of the issuance of money in the United States."

Union Party.—On October 7, Dr. Townsend sent a telegram to his California director asking Townsendites to support Landon in the state, since Lemke is not on the ballot. Two days later Secretary Ickes charged over the radio that there is "a common understanding between the Republican high command on the one hand and Father Coughlin on the other." On October 11, Dr. Townsend stated, "I consider a vote for Mr. Roosevelt a vote against the national recovery plan bearing my name." He said he wanted Townsendites to vote for Landon in all the nine states where Lemke is not on the ballot. Father Coughlin gave a speech apparently answering Secretary Ickes, indicating that Roosevelt is after all not all bad, and that if Lemke were not a candidate he would be forced to vote for him. Meanwhile strange things were going on in New York State. The charge was made to the Secretary of State there that petitions to put Union party candidates on the ballot were circulated and filed "at the instance and by the procurement of the Republican State committee." Then the Union party made a move to withdraw from the ballot its state-wide candidates, indicating that new names would be substituted. The Secretary of State, paying exclusive attention to the petitions on hand, endorsed the full Union list. The Republican gubernatorial candidate refused to make a move for Union party support. Father Coughlin's campaign, curbed somewhat by a throat ailment, continued on into New England, where he had trouble with a newspaper reporter and was reported to say he "would tear him to pieces." Analysts believed the presidential vote might be influenced seriously in three states by Lemke's candidacy, including North Dakota, which they definitely put into the Landon column because of votes taken from Roosevelt by its native congressman.

Catholic Holland Speaks.—Recent conditions have given rise to considerable unrest in Holland, which has one of the stanchest of Catholic populations. These Dutch have not only kept their faith heroically, but have intensified their efforts in almost every department of religio-cultural activity. Nevertheless propagandists for Communism and National-Socialism have not been idle; and sometimes they have profited by secret agreements with officials. Accordingly the bishops have assumed the offensive. The latest in a series of pastoral letters vigorously attacks both extremist doctrines, accusing the Communists of sponsoring a gospel of hate the ultimate consequences of which are godlessness and forced labor, and stigmatizing the racial and religious tenets of the Nazi creed. Catholics are warned to be resolute in their antipathy to both, and to manifest their sympathy by giving alms to help victims of persecution in all countries where the Church has been struggling for the right to exist. The feast of Christ the King has been designated as an especial day of prayer and almsgiving in behalf of the refugees. Meanwhile a special executive Committee of Catholic Action has been formed by men who, in the language of the bishops, "have taken the initiative and banded together in order to correlate the energies of our rich and manifold Catholic life in order to promote the honor of God in private and public life and to combat every form of blasphemy." Though Holland has long been especially concerned with the German Catholic situation, it has more recently followed events in Spain with the deepest interest. No other country has seen Catholics set themselves so energetically to the task of seeing the European religious situation as a whole.

The Pampered Schoolboy.—Dr. Tyler Dennett, who turned from Mary Baker Eddy to Williams College, is famed for his indifference to substitutes for rugged individualism. Though he gratefully accepted, in behalf of the college, a gift of $2,400,000 in honor of Mark Hopkins, and predicted that eventually $7,600,000 would have to be found to go along with it, Dr. Dennett was both critical and pessimistic. "The boys of Mark Hopkins's day brought a larger stock of character to college than now," he remarked. A gradual softening of the masculine spine has been in progress. The parental fad is to prolong the infancy of doting boys—to substitute, as it were, a 198-coil spring mattress equipped with felt pads for the straw tick on which our grandfathers rested their sturdy limbs. Dr. Dennett added another dig in the general educational direction. "College education," he said, "is now a social badge to be worn with white vest and tails. There are many places where you cannot belong without it. Application for college entrance may mean nothing more than that some boy or his parents wish to do what other people are doing. Application for admission to college, far from showing character, may even show lack of it." But he admitted that more youths were trying to earn part of their way through Alma Mater, and believed it a "wholesome condition." The donor of the $2,400,000 was, however, eager for softening the professor's lot. He stipulated that not a cent of his money was to go for aught else save the salaries of "professors, instructors, and officers of instruction." Being after all a Hopkins, he manifested some educational common sense.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.— The National Council for the Prevention of War with a membership of thirty-one civic and religious peace organizations is drawing up a peace program to be presented at the next session of Congress. Religious bodies, farmers' organizations, labor unions, college organizations and women's clubs will participate in the drafting of the program. In Philadelphia, National Peace Enrolment blanks are being distributed through the churches. They give the individual a choice of refusing to "participate in any war" categorically or with the exception of "an unprovoked armed invasion of continental United States by a foreign foe."

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In England the League of Clergy for Peace, which is open to all clergy, except bishops, in communion with the Church of England, is meeting at intervals to discuss international problems from a Christian standpoint. * * * The Seventh General Council of the United Church of Canada has completed its ten days' meeting at Ottawa. Permission was given for the ordination of women to the ministry. It was decided to strengthen a central emergency fund to supplement inadequate salaries of ministers, of which there is considerable evidence. A committee was appointed to facilitate further unions of various denominations with the United Church. A resolution in favor of sterilization was defeated, but the council approved the establishment of birth control clinics under public supervision and control. Resolutions on gambling, liquor and war were approved, but no action was taken on the social question. * * * At the meeting which opened the Preaching Mission at Birmingham, Alabama, there were 800 Negroes in a crowd of 7,000. * * * In San Francisco religious services are being held at noon throughout the month under the auspices of the Christian Business Men's Committee of the Bay region. * * * Following an adverse State Supreme Court decision, Jewish, Protestant and Catholic religious leaders in Colorado have issued an open letter to the voters of the state to urge the adoption of an amendment to the state constitution that would exempt from taxation the personal property of charitable, religious and educational institutions.

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World's Fair of 1939.—The board of directors of the New York World's Fair of 1939 approved the general plan for the projected exhibition, and actual construction will start in December of this year. Already the city, state and federal governments have commenced their portion of the work. This is permanent work, including the acquisition and proper development of the 1,216½-acre tract on Flushing Bay and the development of the surrounding water and land area, work which is expected to cost about $35,000,000. The fair corporation will spend about $30,000,000 on administration and exhibit buildings and private interests are expected to invest about $50,000,000. An average daily attendance of 250,000 is expected, with the maximum for a day, 800,000. "The theme is the creation of a better and fuller life—the advancement of human welfare." The center of the fair will be a 250-feet high "Theme Building" where will be a panorama showing how the tools of today's civilization have been developed in the 150 years since the inauguration of George Washington (the anniversary of which event the fair celebrates), and how they are to be used to produce the better "world of tomorrow." Ten zones will radiate from the center: "Each zone will carry out the theme in its own way. In each there will be a focal point which will indicate the nature of the zone—clothing, shelter, education, government and cooperation, the arts, the basic industries, health, recreation, sustenance, or public and social services—whichever it is. In these focal points, each one of a different nature, a story of the past and the present may be read, and some idea of the future may be gained." A central idea is to dramatize "the interdependence of the various groups, cities, states and nations, the interrelation of urban and rural peoples, and the story of the nation's rise to greater power by reason of its recognition." Furthermore, "Our fair will be a brilliant, entertaining spectacle; it will offer the best in architecture, sculpture, dioramas, murals, music and amusements; it will entertain with athletic contests, water sports, opera, moving pictures and the drama; it will display all the best that the nations offer in materials and ideas, all the things available to every man in every community, all the things easily to be attained. . . ." The amusement section will stretch more than a mile along the main lagoon.

American Cooperators Meet.—At the opening of the tenth biennial congress of the Cooperative League of the United States at Columbus, Ohio, October 8-11, the president, James P. Warbasse, praised the present administration for its help to cooperatives and warned that the acceptance of too much assistance might lead to government control. He outlined four steps whereby the "profit economic system" might be transformed into a "cooperative system without shock": education among stockholders and consumers; vote of stockholders that each shall have one vote regardless of number of shares held; limitation of interest and dividends to current rate of interest; provision of goods and services at current prices with periodical dividends to consumers on the basis of their purchases. Dr. Warbasse stressed the democratic character of the consumer cooperative system and its destruction in Russia, Italy and Germany. Mr. E. R. Bowen, general secretary of the League, which represents today some 3,000,000 consumers, predicted that in ten years the nation's cooperatives would control the majority of its distribution of consumption goods. Other leaders were less optimistic, but the conference was attended by a number of important business observers. Murray Lincoln of the Ohio Farm Bureau recommended that members transfer their funds from capitalistic banks and insurance companies to cooperative banks and insurance companies. "To be safe the cooperative system must own its own financial system," he declared. Edward A. Filene, wealthy Boston merchant and philanthropist, who is inaugurating a chain of cooperative department stores, attacked American business men for failing to solve the problem of distribution and said that "poverty in America is absurd. All that is necessary is that all these resources, all this power and all this skill be placed at the service of the mass consumer." A message from William Green of the A. F. of L. invited cooperators to a close alliance and a resolution was passed calling for cordial collaboration with labor and agriculture. The development of capable managers and the enlisting of youth were designated as pressing problems. Other resolutions called upon Congress to expand electrification projects beyond rural areas and to set up a credit agency to assist cooperative housing at low rates. During the next two years cooperators will seek to displace capitalist enterprise through free competition, encouraging defeated businesses to join the movement without requiring a transfer of the ownership of fixed capital.

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The Play and Screen

Gielgud's Hamlet

JOHN GIELGUD'S Hamlet has proved well worth waiting for. Though it is perhaps not one of the supreme Hamlets of the stage, it is an intensely interesting one in its intellectual grasp. Whatever a keen mind and a sensitive intelligence can accomplish Mr. Gielgud accomplishes. He makes old lines, repeated through so many generations of actors that they have seemed drained of vitality, leap into new life and meaning through the novel, yet perfectly natural, manner in which he utters them. To hear him, for instance, approach the phrase, "To hold, as't were, the mirror up to nature," his hesitance, as if seeking for a suitable figure, followed by his almost apologetic offering of the famous words, is electric. Also his reading of the soliloquy, "Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt," has not been equaled since the days of Forbes-Robertson; and his rebuke to his mother was beautifully done. At these moments, and at many others, Mr. Gielgud's interpretation is at once original and true. Moreover, he is picturesque and graceful in movement, and yet his movements always have a meaning. Intellectually then Mr. Gielgud's Hamlet is portraiture of a high order.

Emotionally, however, he is less satisfying. It is all very well to argue that his is a modern Hamlet, but Hamlet, modern as he is in some ways, is yet a figure of the Gothic world, and the high poetry of his lines, and his intense feeling, must be brought out to give the character in its fully rounded beauty. In concentrating upon the sense Mr. Gielgud often misses the music and magic of the words, and with them not a little of the innate nobility of the man himself. Though Hamlet is a man of thought and revery rather than of action, he is essentially masculine, and there are moments when Mr. Gielgud's impersonation is not notable for this quality, and at other moments in attempting to attain power he only succeeds in being febrile, even neurasthenic. Yet when all is said and done Mr. Gielgud's remains a memorable performance. Of the others in the cast Lillian Gish is an appealing Ophelia, the most effective performance I have seen with the one exception of Celia Johnson. Judith Anderson gives dignity and poignancy to Gertrude, John Emery is excellent as Laertes, and George Nash as the First Grave-Digger. Arthur Byron's Polonius lacks something in humor, and misses the pomposity of the character, but his advice to Laertes is magnificently rendered. (At the Empire Theatre.)

St. Helena

R. C. SHERRIFF and Jeanne De Casalis in choosing Napoleon's exile at St. Helena as the basis of their play undertook a difficult task indeed. Of external drama there could be little, and the depiction of the great Corsican surrounded by petty bickerings and annoyances is the choice of a deliberate anti-climax. Yet the play despite this proves interesting to all who do not demand external action, and the authors have given a remarkable portrayal of the disintegration of a world conqueror. Fortunately, too, we witnessed a really remarkable impersonation of the Corsican by Maurice Evans. That we could feel his Napoleon was the conqueror of Europe would be too much to say; no one but a supreme histrionic genius could accomplish that miracle, but he gave a very varied, a most human portrayal of the suffering man, and never made him for a moment a figure of lath and plaster. That Mr. Evans has also given remarkable impersonations of Romeo and of the effeminate King in "Saint Joan" stamps him as one of the foremost actors of the theatre. Of the others in the cast first honors should go to Percy Waram, who makes Sir Hudson Lowe an extraordinarily vivid figure. Mr. Waram has not yet received his due in a part worthy of his abilities. Excellent too are the Dr. O'Meara of Whitford Kane, the Cipriani of Jules Epailly, and the Countess Montholon of Kay Strozzi. "St. Helena" is a play which every admirer of Napoleon will want to see, and others will be interested in. It deserves success. (At the Lyceum Theatre.)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Gay Desperado

"THE GAY DESPERADO" is a desperately gay satirization of the machine-gun technique of American gangster films by good-natured swashbuckling Mexican bandits of the romantic old Spanish school below the Rio Grande. Some highly amusing and frequently hilarious results come from the broad burlesquing of the Hollywood version of blood-and-thunder lawlessness that spits fire from gun muzzles carried in careening cars in city streets. They bring "Chicago" to the sleepy old Mexican deserts and hills.

Nino Martini is in splendid voice as he emulates a laughing, dashing, singing señor in wide sombrero, laboring unsuccessfully as an amateur bad man even though he is under the expert tutelage of Leo Carrillo, chief picaroon, who virtually kidnaped the singer and made him an unwilling member of his gay desperadoes in order to satisfy his own weakness for music.

This is no ordinary plains-riding "hoss opera," but a handsomely staged production deftly treating a uniquely implausible plot that sets a high line of diversification through many surprises, romantic love interest, lilting music, lively dialog and skilful outlands photography, all harmonized with satisfaction by the clever director, Rouben Mamoulian. The intriguing fun becomes eruptive when the bandits storm and capture a borderline broadcasting station in order to give their golden-voiced protégé the opportunity of a radio debut for which he had longed. Mr. Martini, after some previous Hollywood mishaps, now gives strong proof that a Metropolitan Opera star can be a good screen comic both lyrical and laughable. He sings two songs written for the film, "The World Is Mine," by Holt Marvel and George Posford, and "Adios Mi Tierra," by Miguel Sandoval, both unimportant but not appearing so under Mr. Martini's delivery. But it is in his singing of Verdi's "Celeste Aida" that the real height of "The Gay Desperado" is reached.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Communications

THE CLERGY AND POLITICS

Louisville, Ky.

TO the Editor: A communication appearing in THE COMMONWEAL, October 2, by Mr. F. J. Moran, under the heading of "The Clergy and Politics," suggests two points which I respectfully submit as timely:

(1) Although I fully agree with Mr. Moran that the clergy as a class should keep out of politics (I practise what I preach. I even register as an independent, and tell no one how I vote), yet I aver that should an individual clergyman, with the permission of his bishop, by way of an exception, and in a gentlemanly manner, wish to commit himself on economic, social and even political issues, he commits no impropriety. Should he lay aside pastoral work altogether (with due permission and decorum of course) and engage wholly in economic, social and political activities, I contend he is still within the limits of propriety, and that he violates no law, human or divine. He breaks no law of the land, no law of the Church, and no law of God.

(2) The second point to which I direct attention is that too few Catholic laymen interest themselves in economic and social matters and equip themselves to become leaders in correcting "injustices in the social order that call for remedial action." There are too few Catholic laymen that apply themselves sufficiently to attain any outstanding scholarship, especially in the philosophy of economics and kindred subjects. As a result we have too few Catholic laymen that are outstanding scholars, editors, orators and leaders of public opinion. The influence of Catholic laymen is almost nil as far as the public mind is concerned. In this respect it would seem that Catholic laymen, as a class, are so many Rip Van Winkles. To give but one instance: THE COMMONWEAL is the only Catholic review, so far as I know, that is conducted by laymen. And I suspect few Catholic laymen read it. If Catholic laymen were on the "watch-tower," working for "plebeian matters" that concern Caesar, they would be fighting for the interests of Catholic principles in the adjustment of money problems, economic problems, social problems and other kindred problems.

REV. JOSEPH A. NEWMAN.

West Hartford, Conn.

TO the Editor: It is with sorrow that I feel bound to write this letter to you. I always felt that your prime purpose was to spread Catholic truth. But I am inclined to doubt your sincerity after reading a letter you inserted in your correspondence column in the issue of October 2.

The writer of this letter, F. J. Moran, professes to be a layman. Contrary to Catholic doctrine he proceeded to preach that priests should not talk on subjects of social justice. The laymen, he added, can do that better. The laymen of old, as well as the civil authorities of old, said the very same thing about Our Divine Lord. They called Him some very harsh names in order to silence His pleas for the oppressed. And finally they killed Him to silence His voice forever.

But that Voice still lives in the person of His priests when they teach social doctrine. It was to priests and to them only that Christ said, "Go and teach whatsoever I have taught you." For the benefit of laymen he added, "Who hears you, hears Me, and whoever rejects you rejects Me."

A certain radio orator who teaches social doctrine was especially vilified in the letter. That priest is commissioned by his bishop and until suppressed by him he is the authorized representative of Christ. If he should teach error, the Church will warn us in time. Christ has promised to send the Holy Spirit to keep us from error. When it comes to teaching social justice, then, I maintain that priests and they alone are the Voice of Christ and I am surprised that a Catholic paper would print a letter that denies it.

Furthermore, the letter is a mess of error. I will quote from the letter verbatim: "If there are injustices in the social order that call for remedial action, the appeal of a united Catholic laity would receive a more sympathetic hearing and support, I believe, than would be accorded to the men of the cloth. The latter may be more brilliant, more learned, but—they are the Church." What nonsense! The priests are the Church? They are not, indeed. The church militant is composed of priests and laymen who do the Will of God.

I cannot see why a Catholic paper would give space to such a letter as that written by F. J. Moran of West Hartford. And being located in that town I want to protest with emphasis, not against the ignorance of Mr. Moran on the doctrine of Catholicity, but against THE COMMONWEAL which saw fit to spread its falsehoods broadcast.

CATHOLIC PRIEST.

SHARE-CROPPERS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The criticism of my article, "The Share-cropper," which is voiced by Father Barry, C.S.P., in a recent issue is very interesting, and I think we are not so far apart in our ideas as he would seem to infer. I distinctly stated that conditions might be as bad as they are painted in the country "down the river." The point I tried to make was that tenant farming as such is not an evil, but can be, with the proper cooperation from the landowners, a real opportunity for the tenant, enabling him, as he could in no other way, to obtain an economic foothold. This would not happen under a system of absentee landlordism. We did not have that in my part of Virginia. The farms were owned by the people who lived on them, and almost without exception they looked upon their tenants, black or white, as a responsibility and tried to aid them—if they would be aided—to better things. My father, who still occupies our place, looks on them in that way yet.

In conclusion I stated that it was my conviction that the problems of tenancy would not be satisfactorily solved

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unless we have a return to that older system. I still think so.

Perhaps it may be worth the while of those who are studying the problem to have a look around Piedmont, Virginia, where the old idea of *noblesse oblige* is still not altogether dead, and where men can and still do, with a little energy and foresight, rise out of the tenant class into that of landowners. I am still very positive that the lot of our average "share-cropper" is far and away better than that of the average (not the exceptional) industrial worker today.

FLOYD KEELER.

FAULTY DISTRIBUTION

Oshkosh, Wis.

TO the Editor: In your issue of September 11 is a communication from Mr. A. R. Blanchard of Owego, New York, on "Faulty Distribution," in which the writer attempts to point out the non-productive costs that enter into or burden production, and that reduce the producers' ability to buy back what they had produced. The writer lists a number of these non-productive costs, but he omits the largest, most important and least necessary item, namely, ground rent.

If Mr. Blanchard will make some investigation of the ground rent (not building nor improvement rent) paid by tenants of farms and factories, by merchants, hotels, banks, by different users of land, mines, water powers and other natural resources, he will, I think, appreciate the vast sums collected by the various forms of landlordism, for which no return whatever is made, and which is a dead weight on production. The ground rent burden is computed by different writers at $9,000,000,000 to $12,000,000,000 a year.

I am writing in response to the suggestion of Mr. Blanchard, that THE COMMONWEAL might discuss this subject in its columns; and I agree with the suggestion.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

THE HARVEST OF DESPAIR

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Bernard Coffin's "The Harvest of Despair" in your September 25 issue was so very good, especially the last two paragraphs suggesting that all Catholics place themselves aside, and think, for a change, in terms of "How can I help this man or woman or child who has come to my door?" God sends us these appeals—do we turn them away? Saint Catherine of Siena said the rarest and finest charity is "mental charity." This simply means that we must stop and think for a time how we can help—for we can indeed help, if our mind is attuned to God's service, in practise: the love of our neighbor, a kind word, a night's shelter, a little money, a good meal, a new coat or the money for warm clothing. Let us begin now to dedicate ourselves to Our Lord—to feel the privilege we have of giving to all, in His Name! What a changed and happier life will be ours!

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Books

Harvard—Twenty-Five Years After

Was College Worth While? A factual attempt to show the country what four years at college did to and for a group of young Americans—The Harvard Class of 1911; by John R. Tunis. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

IN SEPTEMBER Harvard celebrated, with more than usual fanfare, the three-hundredth anniversary of its founding. That is the least reason why Mr. Tunis's work is of more than passing interest. One might expect that on an occasion such as this some enthusiastic alumnus would rush into print with a work based on the fickle foundation of the questionnaire and disdaining to elicit nine cheers for dear old Harvard. Mr. Tunis is no cheerleader. In no page does he allow enthusiasm to destroy calm, scholarly perspective. Witness the note on which this 234-page work closes:

"That lamp of learning, tended by the ancient Greeks, blown white and high in the medieval universities and handed down to us in a direct line through Paris, Oxford and Cambridge, has at last produced a group of men whose chief ambitions, if their records tell the truth, is to vote the Republican ticket, to keep out of the breadline, and to break 100 at golf. Enviable ambitions? Yes, but does one need to go to college to have such aspirations?"

Before the author's body is suspended from the nearest tree by indignant Harvard alumni, may I, an extern, suggest that Mr. Tunis probably wrote this work with a twinkle in one eye and the other on the faculty—the dear old professors, who may or may not survive the shock of a cold shower such as "Was College Worth While?"

Mr. Tunis bases his book on 583 questionnaires distributed to the Harvard graduates of the class of 1911. The answers he quotes are indicative of a point he missed entirely—that Harvard has failed to turn out, if this book be a criterion, as large a proportion of conceited jackasses as are found in most alumni groups. Moreover, despite the criticisms heaped upon Harvard's educational process, in it the virtue of honesty seems not to be obliterated.

How can one tell whether college is worth while? No two persons have yet agreed upon definite criteria. Mr. Tunis seeks to determine the effects Harvard had on the members of his class in earning power, family life, religious belief, political belief, spare-time activities, relations with women, kinds of occupation, success, happiness (?) and general outlook on life. Fifty percent of the members of the class are disappointed in their life work, and after twenty-five years one-tenth of the class is on "public or private" relief. In defense of Harvard it may be urged that one may be a success in a worldly sense and still be a Harvard graduate. It is a tendency of students who have never done an honest day's work in or outside of college to blame alma mater for not supplying a Midas-like touch.

The author dismisses rather abruptly the fact that 87 percent of his class married. Never again will that

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be said of any Harvard class. One in fourteen marriages ended in divorce, which is a better record than a typical non-college group would have. However, the question might be raised as to what preparation for family life Harvard gave this group. Thirty-four percent of the group married college graduates, and the record indicates that these marriages turned out more happily than others. The facts given in this chapter warrant no general conclusion, and Mr. Tunis is not guilty of generalization.

Throughout the whole work, but particularly in the chapter on "Education," the author raises the question as to what real, lasting values are to be found in the educative process. Thirty-three percent of these alumni reported, looking back over the space of twenty-five years, that all of the courses were worthless. Forty-one percent stated that no professor influenced them. Yes, Mr. Tunis makes the picture as bad as possible, and he throws in a little personal observation based on the answers received. "Whatever it taught these men, four years did not teach them to spell." The ratio of men who think football more important than classes for their sons is fifty to one!

The chapter on religion is of special interest to one teaching in that field. Thirteen members of this class became ministers of the Gospel, one a Catholic priest. We suspect that quotations from the priest appear more than once in the chapter. Fifty-eight percent of this Harvard group do not go to church. "Most preachers," writes one, "are an insult to a busy man's intelligence." We assume that this does not apply to Harvard's ministerial quota. Mr. Tunis writes, "Roman Catholics seem deeply touched by their religion." It would indeed be interesting to submit this question to a further and more extensive survey. While only 42 percent of this Harvard group are "churchgoers," the hunger for religion is evident in the replies of some other members of the group. Harvard, despite its religious foundations, seems more successful at producing ardent Republicans than ardent Christians—not that the two are necessarily incompatible.

Indeed this is an interesting but inconclusive study. The reviewer has much more respect for Harvard's educational process than have many of the Harvard alumni here quoted. President Conant might profitably prescribe this work for all his staff and then call a council of war to determine just what "going to Harvard" means. In such action Harvard, as usual, would be a few jumps ahead of most American colleges.

MAURICE J. SHEEHY.

Actresses and Others

The Theatre of the Moment, by George Jean Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

GEORGE JEAN NATHAN is always a personality; at times he is a critic. At these latter moments he uses his personality to show up pretence and uncover humbug, and the gusto with which he wields alternately the rapier and the battle-axe is altogether admirable. He knows how to appreciate and to appreciate well, praising the imaginative, the poetic, in language admirably chosen and considered. His basic common sense, his deep knowledge and love of the theatre, his analytic mind

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might well have made him a moving force in the American drama—and then just when we like him most, he turns a somersault and emitting a whoop proceeds to make faces at everything about him. Is it that he fears to be called a pedant? Surely he ought to know that his personality would save him from that! Is it that he fears to be counted dull? Does he not realize that the only times he borders on that is following a long-continued spree with slap-stick and cap-and-bells? Clever as he is then, he is not always clever enough to avoid the pitfalls of his cleverness. As the bladder falls and the whoops continue we begin to yawn. Yes, odd as it may seem, the Bad Boy of the dramatic critics is most interesting when he is good—for then how good he can be!

How good he is, for instance, in his latest book in the chapter headed "The Histrionic Art." How admirable is what he has to say about the acting of Bergner, and about acting in the movies; how sympathetic and deep-seeing is his appreciation and analysis of the four figures he considers the first actresses of our stage—Katherine Cornell, Helen Hayes, Lynn Fontanne and Ina Claire. Admirable, too, he is in the chapter where he takes up the various modern playwrights, especially his remarks on Clifford Odets and the Communist boys. And then his chapter on "The Cinema," when he sums it up thus: "The test of any art is the lingering impression it leaves. Upon a well-tuned, well-trained and sensitive mind the movies leave no impression other than one of having spent an hour or so in a spiritual vacuum." Despite his unqualified statement that George M. Cohan is America's finest actor, Mr. Nathan's words on the art of the actor bear reading and rereading. Despite his belief in the magnificence of Sean O'Casey's "Within the Gates," his remarks on contemporary playwrights are usually keen and pregnant. If only Mr. Nathan would cease being proud of being a gadfly!

There are 310 pages in his "The Theatre of the Moment," and most of them should have been left in the periodicals where they originally appeared. But there remain perhaps fifty pages which have deserved their inclusion in more permanent form. At his best Mr. Nathan is one of the real critics of the American theatre—the other times he is just George Jean Nathan, despite his fifty years still an *enfant terrible*.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Modern Ideas

The Nature of Physical Theory, by P. W. Bridgman. Princeton: Princeton University Press. $2.00.

THE HOLLIS professor of mathematics and natural philosophy of Harvard University has expanded the substance of the three Vanuxeum lectures which he gave at Princeton last December into the present small volume. An experimental physicist of high standing, with "the clear recognition that ultimately the important thing about any theory is what it actually does, not what it says it does or what the author thinks it does," Professor Bridgman undertakes a critical analysis of the means by which we correlate and understand physical phenomena.

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His standard of criticism is, as might be suspected, the "operational" method.

The highly publicized, and little understood, special theory of relativity has had little or no effect on the practical results of classical physics. Its significant achievement was rather a fundamental revision in point of view. Formerly, physical concepts were defined in terms of properties which in turn were defined in terms of idealized operations. For example, Newton defined "time" as an absolute quantity which flows uniformly, independent of physical phenomena. The special theory of relativity demands that physical concepts be defined in terms of physical operations actually carried out. Einstein would define "time" relative to the physical operations performed by an actual observer in measuring it. An analysis of the reasons for the success of the Einstein theory led Professor Bridgman to the shocking discovery "that some of our fundamental concepts and modes of thought were incapable of dealing with the enlarged physical situations that were developing"; and he determined to put his scientific thinking "on such a secure basis that this sort of thing may not happen again." Thus came the development of the "operational" technique, which he elaborated in "The Logic of Modern Physics" and various journal-articles, and extended in the present volume.

The fundamental revision of our physical concepts wrought by the modern theories of radiation, relativity and wave-mechanics has led many critics and philosophers of science to question and examine concepts and activities of a more fundamental nature beyond the domain of physics, belonging properly to philosophy and metaphysics. No exception, Professor Bridgman begins his examination of the nature of physical theory with a brief analysis of "our fundamental conscious activities of thought and language" and logic, applying his "operational" scalpel to exhibit their inherent imperfections and limitations. "No pretension is made to scholarly competence or to a systematic examination and critique of others in this field," the author modestly states; and I am not inclined to subject his treatment of those subjects to further criticism than to say that scholastic philosophers will doubtless find it inadequate, and exhibit its metaphysical weaknesses. Extending his analysis to the field of mathematics, Professor Bridgman concludes that "mathematics is ultimately an experimental science, for freedom from contradiction cannot be proved, but only postulated and checked by observation, similarly existence can only be postulated and checked by experience."

To this reviewer, the merit of the book resides more in the author's critical analyses of mathematics in application, mathematical models, general relativity and wave-mechanics. Although the latter two theories are replete in mathematical formalism, their definite lack of textual discussion and criticism makes Professor Bridgman's profound analyses the more valuable. Hardly a book for the layman, "The Nature of Physical Theory" is a valuable addition to the literature of critical physics, and no student who aspires to a thorough understanding of modern physics can afford to overlook it.

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